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MARIEN'S PILGRIMAGE
AND OTHER POEMS

BY

MARY HOWITT

THE LIBRARY
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THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

To

Elizabeth and Dante Wilcox

with Aunt H's love and sincere

wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy New

December 24th/63

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MARIEN'S PILGRIMAGE,

A Fire-side Story:

AND OTHER POEMS.

By MARY HOWITT.

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Marien's Pilgrimage.

A FIRE-SIDE STORY.

CHRISTIANITY, like a little child goes wandering over the world. Fearless in its innocence, it is not abashed before princes, nor confounded by the wisdom of synods. Before it the blood-stained warrior sheathes his sword, and plucks the laurel from his brow;—the midnight murderer turns from his purpose,

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and, like the heart-smitten disciple, goes out and weeps bitterly. It brings liberty to the captive, joy to the mourner, freedom to the slave, repentance and forgiveness to the sinner, hope to the faint-hearted, and assurance to the dying.

It enters the huts of poor men, and sits down with them and their children; it makes them contented in the midst of privations, and leaves behind an everlasting blessing. It walks through great cities, amid all their pomp and splendour, their unimaginable pride, and their unutterable misery, a purifying, ennobling, correcting, and redeeming angel.

It is alike the beautiful companion of childhood and the comfortable associate of

age. It ennobles the noble; gives wisdom to the wise; and new grace to the lovely. The patriot, the priest, the poet, and the eloquent man, all derive their sublimest power from its influence.

Thanks be to the Eternal Father, who has made us one with Him through the benign spirit of Christianity!

Part First.

THROUGH the wide world went Marien
On a holy mission sent,
A little child of tender years,
Throughout the world she went.

And ever, as she went along,
Sweet flowers sprang 'neath her feet;
All flowers that were most beautiful,
Of virtues strong and sweet.

And ever, as she went along,
The desert beasts grew tame;
And man, the savage, dyed with blood,
The merciful became.

Now, if you will attend to me,
I will in order tell
The history of this little child,
And what to her befel.

No friend at all had Marien,
And at the break of day,
In a lonesome place within the world,
In quiet thought she lay.

The stars were lost in coming morn,
The moon was pale and dim,
And the golden sun was rising
Over the ocean's rim.

With upturned eye lay Marien:—
"And I am alone," said she,
"Though the blackbird and the nightingale
Sing in the forest-tree:

"Though the weak woodland creatures
Come to me when I call,
And eat their food from out my hand;
And I am loved by all:

"Though sun, and moon, and stars come out,
And flowers of fairest grace,
And whate'er God made beautiful,
Are with me in this place:

"Yet I am all alone, alone,
Alone both night and day!
So I will forth into the world,
And do what good I may:

"For many a heart is sorrowful,
And I that heart may cheer:
And many a weary captive pines
In dungeons dark and drear;—

And I the iron bonds may loose,—
Then why abide I here?

"And many a spirit dark with crime,
Yet longeth to repent;
And many a grievous wrong is done
To the weak and innocent;—
And I may do the injured right,
May save the penitent!

"Up, I will forth into the world!"
And, thus as she did say,
Sweet Marien from the ground rose up
And went forth on her way.

Through the wood went Marien,
The thick wood and the green;
And not far had she travelled ere
A cruel sight was seen.

Under the green and leafy boughs
Where singing birds were set;
At strife about their heritage,
Two ruffian brothers met.

"Thou shalt not of our father's land,"
The elder said, "have part!"
The younger brother spoke no word,
But stabbed him to the heart.

Then deep into the forest dark
With desperate speed he ran,
And gentle Marien stood beside
The bleeding, murdered man.

With pitying tears that would not cease,
She washed his wounded side,
And prayed him to have faith in Him
Who for the sinner died.

But no sign made the murdered man,
There stiff in death he lay;—
And Marien through the forest wild
Went mourning on her way.

Ere long, as she went wandering on,
She came to where there sat,
With folded arms upon her breast,
A woman desolate.

Pale was she as the marble stone,
And stedfast was her eye;
She sat enchained, as in a trance,
By her great misery.

"What ails thee, mother?" Marien said,
In a gentle voice and sweet;
"What aileth thee, my mother?"
And knelt down at her feet.

"What aileth thee, my mother?"
Kind Marien still did say;
And those two words, *my mother*,
To the lone heart found their way.

As one who wakeneth in amaze,
She quickly raised her head;—
And "who is't calls me mother?"
Said she, "my child is dead!

"He was the last of seven sons—
He is dead—I have none other;—
This is the day they bury him;—
Who is it calls me mother?"

"'Tis I," said gentle Marien,
"Dear soul, be comforted!"
But the woman only wrung her hands,
And cried, "My son is dead!"

"Be comforted," said Marien,
And then she sweetly spake
Of Jesus Christ, and how he came
The sting from death to take.

She told of all his life-long love,
His soul by suffering tried:
And how at last his mother stood
To see him crucified.

Of the disciples' broken hearts
She told, of pangs and pain;
Of Mary at the sepulchre,
And Christ arisen again.

"Then sorrow not," she said, "as though
Thou wert of all bereft;
For still, though thy beloved are not,
This blessed faith is left,

"That when thy dream of life is o'er,
Thou shalt embrace thy seven,
More beautiful than earthly sons,
With our dear Lord in heaven!"

Down on her knees the woman fell,
And "bless'd be God," said she,
"Who in my sorest need hath sent
This comforter to me!"

Part Second.

Now Marien in the woman's house
Abode a little space,
And comfort to the mother came;
And a dear daughter's place

Had Marien in the woman's heart,
Doing the while a daughter's part.

But now 'twas time that she must go,
For Marien's duty was not there,
Now grief was past, and woe was done;
So, with the rising of the sun,
She rose up forth to fare.

"Nay, bide with me," the woman said,
"Or if, as thou dost say,
Duty forbid that this may be,
I a day's journey go with thee,
To speed thee on the way."

So forth the loving pair set out,
The woman and the child;
And first they crossed the desert heath,
And then the mountains wild.

And in the woman's arms she lay
That night within the forest hoar,
And the next morn, with loving heart,
They said farewell as those who part
To meet on earth no more.

Upon her way went Marien,
From morn till set of day,
And the peace of God that passeth word,
Upon her spirit lay,
And oftentimes she sang aloud
As she went on her way.

The joyfullest song sang Marien
That e'er left human tongue;
The very birds were mute to hear
The holy words she sung.

But now the darksome night came on,
And Marien laid her down
Within a little way-side cave,
On mosses green and brown.

And in the deepest hush of night
Rude robbers entered in;
And first they ate and drank, then rose
To do a deed of sin.

For with them was a feeble man,
Whom they had robbed, and they
Here came to foully murder him,
And hide him from the day.

Up from her bed sprang Marien,
With heavenly power endued;
And in her glorious innocence,
Stood 'mong the robbers rude.

"Ye shall not take the life of man!"
Spake Marien low and sweet;
"For this will God take strict account,
Before his judgment-seat!"

Out from the cave the robbers fled,
For they believed there stood,
A spirit stern and beautiful,
Not aught of flesh and blood.

And two from out the robber-band
Thenceforward did repent,
And lived two humble christian men,
On righteous deeds intent.

When from the cave the robber-band
Had fled, the aged man
Rose from the floor where he was laid,
And marvelling much, began.

"Who art thou, child? and those few words
Of might which thou hast spoken,
What may they be? My foes have fled—
And, lo! my bonds are broken;—
At thy few words my foes have fled,
My rigid bonds have broken!"

Then Marien 'gan to tell him how,
Through her God's power had wrought,
And him from peril, nigh to death,
Thus wondrously had brought.

She told how holy Daniel's faith
The caged beasts disarmed;
How the three righteous children walked
Through raging fire unharmed.

She told how Peter, bound with chains,
Lay in the prison-ward,

How God's good angel freed him straight,
And the strong prison's iron gate
Oped of its own accord.

"God knows our wants," said Marien,
"And in our sorest need,
Puts forth his arm to rescue us,
For he is merciful, and thus
It is that thou art freed."

"Let us go hence!" the old man said,
And o'er the forest sod,
They, hand in hand, with quiet steps,
Went forward praising God.

Ere noontide, to a forest grange
They came, a sylvan place,
Where trooped, no longer fearing man,
The forest's native race,
The white doe and the antlered stag,
And every beast of chase.

'Twas joy to see them drawing near
The old man as he came;
And this he stroked, and that he called
By some familiar name

'Twas joy unto the little child
This pleasant place to see;
"This is my home," he said, "and here
Thou shalt abide with me.

"I have no child to be mine heir,
And I am growing old;—
Thou shalt be heir of all my lands,
And heir of all my gold.

"Thou shalt be comfort to mine age,
And here within this wood,
'Mongst faithful, gentle things, shalt thou
Grow up to womanhood;"

There dwelt the loving Marien,
Within the forest wild,
And she unto the lone old man
Was dearer than a child.

There dwelt the loving Marien;
Yet not long dwelt she there;—
The old man died;—and then came forth
A kinsman for the heir.

A lean and rugged man of pelf
In wickedness grown old;
From some vile city-den he came
And seized upon the gold;—
He slew the tamed forest-beasts,—
The forest-grange he sold,

And with hard speeches, coarse and rude,
Away the child he sent;
Meek Marien answered not a word,
But through the forest went.

Part Third.

Through the wild wood went Marien,
For many a weary day;
Her food the forest-fruits, and on
The forest-turf she lay.

The wildern wood was skirted
By moorlands dry and brown;
And after them came Marien
Into a little town.

At entrance of the little town
A cross stood by the way,
A rude stone cross, and there she knelt
A little prayer to say.

Then on the stone-steps sate her down;
And soon beside her crept,
A pale child with a clasped book,
And all the while he wept.

"Why weep you child," asked Marien,
"What troubleth you so sore?"
At these words spoken tenderly,
The child wept more and more.

"I have not heard," at length he said,
"Kind words this many a year,
My mother is dead—and my father
Is a hard man and severe.

"I sit in corners of the house
Where none can see me weep;
And in the quiet of the day
'Tis here I often creep.

"The kid leaps by his mother's side,
The singing birds are glad:
But when I play me in the sun,
My heart is ever sad.

"They say this blessed book can heal
All trouble, and therefore
All day I keep it in my sight;
I lay it 'neath my head at night,
But it doth bring no cure to me:—
I know not what the cause may be
For I of learning have no store!"

Thereat, like to a broken flower
The child drooped down his head;
Then Marien took the clasped book
And of the Saviour read.

She read of him the humble child
Of poverty and scorn;
How holy angels sang for him
The night that he was born.

How blessed angels came from heaven
To hail that Christmas night,
And shepherd people with their flocks
Beheld the glorious sight.

Then read she how, a growing youth,
His parents he obeyed,
And served with unrepining will
St. Joseph at his trade.

Then how he grew to man's estate
And wandered up and down,
Preaching upon the lone sea-side,
And in the busy town.

Of all his tenderness, his love,
Page after page she read;
How he made whole the sick, the maimed,
And how he raised the dead.

And how he loved the children small,
Even of low degree;
And how he blessed them o'er and o'er,
And set them on his knee.

When this the little child had heard
He spoke in accents low,
" Would that I had been one with them
To have been blessed so!"

" Thou shalt be blessed, gentle one!"
Said Marien kind and mild,
" Christ, the Great Comforter, doth bless
Thee, even now, poor child!"

So conversed they of holy things
Until the closing day,
Then Marien and the little child
Rose up to go their way.

As to the town they came, they passed
An ancient church, and " here
Let us go in!" the pale child said,
" For the organ pealeth over head.
And that sweet strain of holy sound
Like a heavenly vesture wraps me round,
And my heavy heart doth cheer."

So Marien and the little child
Into the church they stole;

And many voices rich and soft
Rose upward from the organ loft,
And the majestic instrument
Pealed to an anthem that was sent
To soothe a troubled soul.

Anon the voices died away,
The pealing organ ceased,
And through the church's ancient door
Passed chorister and priest.

And Marien and the little child
Went forward hand in hand
Adown the chancel aisle, and then
At once they made a stand.

Over the altar hung a piece
With holy influence fraught,
A work divine of wondrous skill
By some old painter wrought.

The gracious Saviour breathing love,
Was there like life expressed,
And round his knees the children small
Were thronging to be blessed.

Down dropped the child upon his knees,
And weeping, tenderly
Cried, "Bless me also, poor and weak,
Or let me go to thee!"

Anon his little head dropped low,
And his white lips 'gan to say,
"Oh kiss me gentle one, for now
Even I am called away—
The blessed mother's voice I hear,
It calleth me away!"

So died the child;—and Marien laid
His meek arms on his breast,
With the clasped book between his hands—
Thus God had given him rest!

And Marien, weeping holy tears,
Sate down beside the dead,
And slept that night within the church,
As in a kingly bed.

Scarce from the church had Marien passed,
When came the father there,

As was his wont, though fierce and bad,
To say a morning prayer.

Not seven paces had he gone,
When, heart-struck, he surveyed
Before his feet, that little child
In his dead beauty laid.

At once, as by a lightning stroke,
His softened soul was torn
With a deep sense of all the wrong
That little child had borne.

And then came back the timid voice,
The footstep faint and low,
The many little arts to please,
The look of hopeless woe,
And many a shuddering memory
Of harsh rebuke and blow.

No prayer of self-approving words,
As was his wont, he said,
But humbled, weeping, self-condemned,
He stood before the dead.

Part Four.

Ten long days' travel Marien went,
O'er woodland and o'er wold,
Teaching and preaching by the way,
Like Jesus Christ of old.

Sometimes within the Baron's hall
A lodging she would find,
And never went she from the door
But blessings staid behind;
Proud foes forgiven, revenge withheld,
And plenteous peace of mind.

With shepherd people on the hills;
With toiling peasant men,
She sate; with women dwelling lone,
On mountain or in glen.

By wayside wells she sate her down,
With pilgrims old and bent;
Or, hand in hand, with children small,
To the village school she went.

She made them spare the singing birds
All in their leafy bowers;
She made them love all living things;
And praise God for the flowers.

But now she came to where there raged
Wild war throughout the land;

She heard the vexed people's cry;
She saw the ravaged corn-fields lie;
The hamlets smoking to the sky;
And everywhere careering by
The spoiler's savage band.

All hearts were changed. Like ravening wolves
Men preyed upon each other;
Dead children lay on the bloody mould;
And pitiless had grown, and cold,
The heart of many a mother.

Wild shouts and horrid shrieks around
Filled all the air; the earth
Reeked with the blood that had been spilt;
And man made mockery and mirth
Of agony and mortal woe:—
Yet through all this did Marien go.

Outraged of heart, the child went on,
Weeping upon her way;
And now she soothed a dying wretch;
Then for another ran to fetch
Water; and every day

Did deeds of mercy, good and mild:—
Thus journeyed on the pitying child.

On went she,—and as she went on,
Men grew ashamed of blood,
So beautiful did mercy seem;
And the wild soldier rude
Slunk back as slinks a noisome beast;
And to their homes once more
Came mothers with their little ones;
And old men, weak and hoar,
Sate in the sun as they had wont,
Unfearing at their door.

On went the child,—and as she went,
Within the Baron's hall,
Were hung up helm and mail and sword,
To rust upon the wall.

On went she,—and the poets sung
No longer war's acclaim,
But holy hymns of love and joy,
To hail her as she came.

On went she, like an angel good;
With bounding steps she went,
Day after day, until she came
To the great Conqueror's tent.

There sat he, a strong man of blood,
Steel-mailed and scarfed with blue,
Poring o'er charts of distant lands,
For new lands to subdue.

Beside him stood the gentle child;
And now he traced with care,
Measuring from river unto sea,
A fertile region fair.

"'Tis a good land," said Marien,
"From river unto sea;
And there a quiet people dwell,
Who never heard of thee.

"They feed their flocks and herds in peace;
The fruitful vine they till;
The quiet homes their fathers built
They and their children fill.

" Even now their happy children's joy
Thee and thy will condemn;
Wherefore should'st thou possess that land?
God gave it unto them!"

Into her face the proud man looked,
Amazed at what he heard;
Then turned unto his charts again,
And answered never a word.

Another land among the hills
He measured with his eye;
"'Tis a stern land," said Marien,
" A land of liberty!

" There fled the Christians in old time,
And built their churches there;
The bells upon the sabbath morn
Call all that land to prayer.

" Would'st thou God's people tribulate;
A cursed thing it were

To make that christian land of love
A bloody sepulchre!"
The proud man turned him round about
And fiercely gazed at her.

" Rivers of blood have flowed for thee!"
Unblenching Marien said,
" And many a christian land hast thou
With christian blood made red.

" Up, sin no more! 'Tis coming now,
The day thou canst not flee,
When all the thousands thou hast slain
God will require of thee!

" Thou man of blood, repent, repent,
Repent whilst yet thou may,
And store up deeds of love and peace
Against that awful day!"

Up from his seat the conqueror rose
And paced the uneasy tent,
And ground his teeth and groaned aloud,
As one that doth repent.

Forth from the tent sped Marien;
And many a summer's day
Throughout a blessed land of peace
She journeyed on her way.

Part Five.

At length, after long travel past,
She came as it grew late,
Along a beaten road, that led
To a vast city gate.

A vast and populous city, where
Rose dome, and tower, and spire,
And many a gilded pinnacle,
Far-seen, as the bright sunset fell,
Like glittering points of fire.

A city vast and populous,
Whose thronging multitude
Sent forth a sound afar-off heard,
Strong as the ocean-flood.

A strong, deep sound of many sounds,
Toil, pleasure, pain, delight,
And traffic, myriad-wheeled, whose din
Ceased not by day or night.

And through the city gate a throng
Passed ever, never spent;
A busy mingling human tide
Of those who came and went.

'Twas a proud city and a rich;
A city fair and old;

Filled with the world's most costly things,—
Of precious stones and gold;
Of silks, fine woods, and spiceries;
And all that's bought and sold.

Thither came homeless Marien,
Came there as it grew late,
Foot-sore and weary, friendless, poor,
Unto the city gate.

There found her a poor carpenter
Returning from his trade,
And he, with pitying countenance,
Her weary form surveyed.

"Come!" said he, "thou unto my house,
Shalt go: and of my bread,
And of my cup, thou shalt partake;
Shalt bide with me!" and as he spake
Her weary steps he led.

Unto an humble place that stood
'Mong dwellings of the poor

He brought her; bade her welcome thrice
Unto his lowly door.

The good-wife met her with like cheer,
"And though our fare is scant,
Fear not," she said, "whilst we have food
It is not thou shalt want!"

So dwelt she with this humble pair
In the great city; cherished so,
As parents cherish their first-born,
Nor would they let her go.

Thus for a year she dwelt with them;
And that while their abode
Was blessed exceedingly; their store
Grew daily, weekly, more and more;
And peace so multiplied around,
The very hearth seemed holy ground,
As if once more on earth was found
The Paradise of God.

'Twas she that blessed the bread they ate,
'Twas she soothed all their cares;

They knew not that they entertained
An angel unawares.

With simple hearts that had no guile
They of the Saviour heard;
And, weeping tears of joyful faith,
Believed and blessed each word.

No more they marvelled how their board
With plenteous food was spread;
Five barley loaves dispensed by Christ,
The famished thousands fed.

With love that would not be repressed,
Their kindling bosoms burned,
And 'mong their neighbours poor they went
To teach what they had learned.

To teach how Christ unto the poor,
The sinner vile, was sent;
How Mary washed his feet with tears,
And wiped them with her golden hairs,
A weeping penitent.

And how the sinful woman stood
Unjudged before his face;
How the poor prodigal sped back
Repentant to his place;

How to the thief upon the cross
He said, "Thou art forgiven,
And thou shalt be with me this day,
In the paradise of Heaven."

So preached the carpenter; and men
Turned from their evil ways,
And christian prayer was heard around,
And christian hymns of praise.

Strange seemed these things; and to the rich,
And to the proud, 'twas told,
How many of the meaner sort
Lived like the saints of old.

How holy, blameless, were their lives;
And how poor craftsmen vile.
Amid their fellows, tool in hand,
The gospel preached the while.

'Twas told of Marien; how she came
A wanderer none knew whence;
Friendless and poor, of mind mature,
A child in innocence;
As thus 'twas told, some blessed God,
But others took offence.

"Why," said they, "should this simple child,
These men of low degree,
Thus preach and practise? what new faith
Is there, or need there be?

"Bishops have taught a thousand years,
And learned men are they;
These are mad doctrines, false, unfit,
Devised to lead astray."

Therefore the simple people were
To a full synod brought,
To answer for their altered lives,
And for the faith they taught.

Much marvelled all those learned men
To see them fearless stand,

Calm, unabashed; with ready wit,
And language at command.

And to their taunts of low estate,
They answered, "Let alone
All pride of rank; Christ chose the poor,
To make his gospel known.

"And what are we?—Immortal souls,
For whom Christ's blood was shed;
Children of one great sire, with ye,
Co-heirs of Immortality;
Alike you both in birth and death;
Alone our lot so differeth,
As God shall judge the dead!"

Then were they questioned of old creeds;
By sophistries perplexed;
So that their artless lore might fail,
Their simple souls be vexed.

But they were stedfast in the faith
As taught the holy book;
And thence it was adjudged a crime
Upon its page to look.

And the grave synod rose in wrath,
And they were judged blasphemers dire,
And doomed, their daring heresies
To expiate in fire.

Part Six.

So perished, for their faith in Christ,
  This righteous couple; for their foes
Beseeching pardon; blessing God
  That they were reckoned among those
Worthy to die for Christ, whose place
Is with the Holiest face to face.

Beside the pile stood Marien
Weeping sad human tears,
Yet strengthening, comforting the while,
And soothing all their fears.

And as she spoke, her countenance
With heavenly lustre beamed,
And all around her youthful form
Celestial beauty streamed.

Men looked on her with wondering awe,
As on an angel's face,
And pity, and love, and sweet remorse,
In every heart had place.

Throughout the city rang the tale
Of this divinest child;
And for her sake unto her faith
Many were reconciled.

Unto the synod came these things;
And "here let her be brought,
To answer for herself," they said,
"And suffer as she ought."

As Christ among the doctors stood,
So she among these men,
Stern, rugged-browed, and deeply versed
In parchment and in pen;
Meekly she stood; when they reviled,
Reviling not again.

Yet with sweet words and argument,
Rather of love than lore,
She pleaded for the faith, as ne'er
Pled youthful tongue before.

All were amazed who heard her words;
And straightway spoke each one
Unto his neighbour, "Through this child
May mighty things be done!"

Then threatening words anon grew soft,
"And thou with us shalt go."
They said, "and with the poor and vile,
No longer suffer woe.

"Thou shalt be clothed in purple robes,
In gold and linen fine;

Shalt eat the daintiest food; shalt drink
The spirit-gladdening wine.

"And with us in proud palaces
A crowned queen shalt be;
Leave but these men, for they are poor,
And can do nought for thee!

"Behold the stake at which they burn—
The iron-rack behold—
Are these the men to make thee rich
With silver and with gold?

"Come with us, glorious Marien,
And in our places high,
We will exalt thee as a queen,
Will deck thee royally!"

"Nay," said sweet Marien, "as a queen
It is not I may bide;
I am not won with power nor gold,
Nor aught of human pride.

"Who clothes the lilies of the field,
Will clothe me, even as they;
Who hears the ravens when they cry,
Will feed me day by day!"

But still the tempters kept with her;
And "Come away," they said,
And she unto a sumptuous dome
With royal pomp was led.

They showed her all that palace proud;
They showed her store of gold;
They told her of a hundred realms,
And wealth a hundred-fold.

"And all this shall be thine," they said,
"All this be thine, and more,
So thou wilt bind thyself to us,
And leave the weak and poor!

"Thou that art weak and poor thyself,
A crowned queen shalt be!"

Said Marien, "In the wilderness
The Tempter came, and he
Offered to Jesus Christ such gifts
As now ye offer me!"

Those rugged brows grew dark. "Come now
With us," they fiercely said,
"And see what never daylight saw,
The halls of dool and dread!"

Then unto chambers hidden, vast,
Mysterious, far from view,
They led her; there was set the rack,
The knotted cord, the screw,
And many a horrid instrument,
Whose dark ensanguined hue
Told of their purpose. "These," said they,
Many strange wonders do!

"Look well; could'st thou endure these things?
Strong men have died ere now
Under their torment; men were they,
A little child art thou!"

Then Marien meekly answered, "What
God suffereth you to dare,
He, to whom darkness is as light,
Will strengthen me to bear!"

"Come onward yet," they said; and down
Damp, broken stairs they went;
Down, down to hidden vaults of stone,
Through vapours pestilent.

And then with sullen iron keys
They opened doors of stone;
And heavy-chained captives there
They showed her, one by one.

Old, white-haired men; men middle-aged,
That had been strong of limb;
But each, now pallid, hollow-eyed,
Like spectres worn and dim.

And many, as the dull door oped,
Ne'er lifted up the head;—

Heart-broken victims of long pain,
Whose very hope was dead.

Others with feverish restlessness
Sprang up, and with quick cry,
That thrilled the hearer to the soul,
Demanded liberty.

With bleeding heart went Marien on;
And her conductors spake,
"These are our victims; these await
The rack, the cord, the stake.

"And as these are, so shalt thou be,
If thou our will gainsay;
Accept our service, pride, and power;
Or, on this very day,
Racked, prisoned, poor, and miserable,
Thou shalt be, even as they!"

Down on the floor sank Marien,
And, "Oh, dear Lord," she cried,

"Assist thy poor and trembling one
This awful hour to bide;
Let me be strong to do thy will,
Like Him who bowed, and died!"

They took her:—of that prison-house,
The secrets who may say?—
Racked, fettered, captived, in their power,
The gentle Marien lay;
Captive within their torture-halls,
A long night and a day!

Part Seven.

When forth they brought her; gave her wine,
And pleasant food to eat;
And "rest thee, Marien, in our arms,"
Sung syren-voices sweet.

"Rest thee within our arms; refresh
Thy fainting soul with wine;
Eat and be glad; forget the past,
And make all pleasure thine!

"Tempt me not!" said the feeble child,
"Take hence your spiced bowl;
Is 't not enough to rack my limbs,
But you must vex my soul?

"Look at my flesh, which ye have torn;
Look at your bloody rack;—
Take hence your gifts, and let me go
To my own people back.

"To my own people let me go,
A bruised and broken reed;
I for your purpose am unmeet;
Let me go hence with speed!"

So, in her weakness, prayed the child,
But those remorseless men,
More dead than living, bore her back
Unto their prison-den.

Into a noisome prison-house,
With iron-doors made fast,
'Mong felons and 'mong murderers,
Was gentle Marien cast.

Upon the hard, cold prison-floor,
Sick unto death she lay,
As if God had forsaken her,
For many a weary day.

She thought of her sweet forest life,
And of those creatures small,
Weak, woodland creatures, tamed by love,
That came unto her call.

She thought of him, the forest-lord,
And of the forest-grange;
Of the delicious life she led,
With liberty to range.

And as she thought, even as a child's,
The ceaseless tears did flow,
For torturing pain and misery
Had brought her spirit low.

When one from out the felon-band
Came softly to her side,
And "do not weep, thou little child!"
With pitying voice, he cried.

"At sight of thee, I know not why,
My softened heart doth burn,
And the gone tenderness of youth
Doth to my soul return.

"I think upon my early days,
Like unto days of heaven;
And I, that have not wept for years,
Even as a child, shed ceaseless tears,
And pray to be forgiven!"

"Blessed be God!" said Marien,
And rose up from the floor;
"I was not hither brought in vain!
His mercy I adore,
Who out of darkness brought forth light!"
And thus she wept no more.

But ever of the Saviour taught,
How he came down to win,
With love, and suffering manifold,
The sinner from his sin.

How, not to kings and mighty men
He came, nor to the wise,
But to the thief and murderer,
And those whom men despise.

And how, throughout the host of heaven
Goes yet a louder praise
O'er one poor sinner who doth turn,
From his unrighteous ways,
Than o'er a hundred godly men,
Who sin not all their days.

Thus with the felons she abode,
And that barred prison rude
Was as if angels dwelt therein,
And not fierce men of blood;
For God had her captivity
Turned into means of good.

Now all this while sweet Marien's friends,
Who in the town remained,
Of her took painful thought, resolved
Her freedom should be gained.

And at the last they compassed it,
With labour long and great;
And through the night they hurried her,
Unto the city-gate.

There many a mother stood and child,
Weeping with friendly woe,
Thus, thus to meet, as 'twere from death,
And then to bid her go.

To bid her go, whom so they loved,
Nor once more see her face;
To bid her go; to speed her forth
To some more friendly place.

Thus, amid blessings, prayers, and tears,
About the break of day,
She left the city; praising God
For her release; and swiftly trod
Upon her unknown way.

Part Eight.

A BOW-SHOT from the city-gate
Turned Marien from the plain,
Intent by unfrequented ways
The mountain-land to gain.

With bounding step she onward went,
Over the moorland fells;
O'er fragrant tracks of purple thyme,
And crimson heather-bells.

Joyful in her release she went,
Still onward yet, and higher;
Up many a mossy, stony steep,
Through many a flock of mountain sheep,
By the hill-tarns so dark and deep,
As if she could not tire.

Onward and upward still she went
Among the breezy hills,
Singing for very joyfulness
Unto the singing rills.

The days of her captivity,
The days of fear and pain,
Were past, and now through shade and shine,
She wandered free again.

Free, like the breezes of the hill,
Free, like the waters wild;

And in her fulness of delight,
Unceasingly from height to height
Went on the blessed child.

And ever when she needed food,
Some wanderer of the hill
Drew forth the morsel from his scrip,
And bade her eat her fill.

For He who fed by Cherith-brook
The prophet in his need,
Of this his wandering little one
Unceasingly had heed.

And ever when she needed rest,
Some little cove she found,
So green, so sheltered, and so still,
Upon the bosom of the hill,
As angels girt it round.

Thus hidden 'mong the quiet hills
Alone, yet wanting nought,
She dwelt secure, until her foes
For her no longer sought.

Then forth she journeyed. Soon the hills
  Were of more smooth descent;
And downward now, and onward still,
  Toward the sea she went.

Toward the great sea for many days;
  And now she heard its roar;
Had sunlit glimpses of it now,
  And now she trod the shore.

A rugged shore of broken cliffs,
  And barren wave-washed sand,
Where only the dry sea-wheat grew
  By patches on the strand.

A weary way walked Marien
  Beside the booming sea,
Nor boat, nor hut, nor fisherman
  Throughout the day saw she.

A weary, solitary way;
  And as the day declined
Over the dark and troubled sea
  Arose a stormy wind.

The heavy waves came roaring in
With the strong coming tide;
The rain poured down, and deep dark night
Closed in on every side.

There stood the homeless Marien
With bare, unsandaled feet;
And on her form, with pitiless force,
The raging tempest beat.

Clasping her hands, she stood forlorn,
"In tempest, and in night:"
She cried "O Lord, I trust in thee,
And thou wilt lead me right!"

Now underneath a shelving bank
Of sea-driven sand, there stood
A miserable hut, the home
Of a poor fisher good.

Whose loving wife but yesternight
Died in his arms, and he,
Since that day's noon alone had been
Casting his nets at sea.

At noon he kissed his little ones,
And would be back, he said,
Long ere night closed; but with the night
Arose that tempest dread.

It was an old and crazy boat,
Wherein the man was set,
And soon 't was laden heavily
With many a laden net.

"Oh sorrow, sorrow!" groaned he forth,
As rose the sudden squall,
Thinking upon the mother dead,
And on his children small.

"Oh sorrow, sorrow!" loud he cried,
As the helm flew from his hand,
And he knew the boat was sinking
But half a league from land.

"Oh sorrow, sorrow!" as he sank
Was still his wailing cry:
And Marien heard amid the storm,
That voice of misery.

Now all this while the children small
Kept in their dreary place,
Troubled and sad, and half afear'd
Of their dead mother's face.

And when, to while the time, they played
With shells beside the door,
They found they had not hearts for mirth,
And so they played no more.

Yet keeping up with forced content
Their hearts as best they might,
Still wishing afternoon were gone,
And it was only night.

But when, hour after hour went on,
And the night-tempest black
Raged o'er the stormy sea, and still
The father came not back;

It would have touched a heart of stone
To see their looks of fear—
So young and so forlorn;—their words
Of counsel small to hear.

And now they shouted through the storm;
And then, with better wit,
As they had seen their mother do,
A fire of wood they lit,
That he might see the light afar,
And steer his boat by it.

Unto this light came Marien;
And ere her weary feet
Had reached the floor, the children ran
With eager arms to meet
Their loving father, as they thought,
And give him welcome sweet.

Alas! the father even then
Had run his mortal race;
But God had sent this comforter
To fill his earthly place.

Part Nine.

Woe's me, what secret tears are shed,
What wounded spirits bleed;
What loving hearts are sundered,
And yet man takes no heed!

He goeth on his daily course,
Made fat with oil and wine

And pitieth not the weary souls
That in his bondage pine;
That turn for him the mazy wheel;
That delve for him the mine!

And pitieth not the children small,
In noisy factories dim,
That all day long, lean, pale, and faint,
Do heavy tasks for him!

To him they are but as the stones
Beneath his feet that lie:
It entereth not his thoughts that they
From him claim sympathy.

It entereth not his thoughts that God
Heareth the sufferer's groan,
That in His righteous eye, their life
Is precious as his own.

This moves him not. But let us now
Unto the fisher's shed,
Where sat his weeping little ones
Three days beside the dead.

It was a solitary waste
Of barren sand, which bore
No sign of human dwelling-place
For miles along the shore.

Yet to the scattered dwellers there
Sped Marien, and besought
That of the living and the dead
They would take christian thought.

So in the churchyard by the sea
The senseless dead was laid:
"And now what will become of us!"
The weeping children said.

"For who will give us bread to eat?
The neighbours are so poor!
And he, our kinsman in the town,
Would drive us from his door.

"For he is rich and pitiless,
With heart as cold as stone!
Who will be parents to us now
That ours are dead and gone?"

"Weep not," said faithful Marien,
"Man's heart is not so hard,
But it your friendless misery
Will tenderly regard!

"And I with you will still abide
Your friendless souls to cheer,
Be father and mother both to you;
For this God sent me here.

"And to your kinsman in the town,
Who hath such store of gold,
I will convey you: God can change
His spirit stern and cold.

"And ye, like angels of sweet love,
From earth his soul may win.
Fear not; and we with morning light
The journey will begin."

They took their little worldly store;
And at the break of day,
Leaving the lonesome sea-side shed,
Set out upon their way.

'Mong sandy hills their way they wound;
O'er sea-grass dusk and harsh;
By many a land-mark lone and still;
Through many a salt sea-marsh.

And thus for twice seven days they went
A little, loving band,
Walking along their weary way;
Like angels, hand in hand.

And everywhere kind christian folks
They found, as Marien said,
Who gave them lodging for the night,
And gave them daily bread.

And thus they pilgrimed, day by day,
Alone yet not cast down,
Strengthened by Marien's company,
Unto the sea-port town.

A busy town beside the sea,
Where men were all astir,
Buying and selling; eager-eyed,
Two different races, yet allied,—
Merchant and mariner.

A place of ships, whose name was known
Far off, beyond the main;
A busy place of trade, where nought
Was in repute but gain.

Thither they came, those children poor,
About the eventide;
And where dwelt he, their kinsman rich,
They asked on every side.

After long asking, one they found,
An old man and a poor,
Who undertook to lead them straight
Unto the kinsman's door.

But ever as he went along
He to himself did say,
Low broken sentences, as thus,
"Their kinsman!—well-a-way!"

All through a labyrinth of walls
Blackened with cloudy smoke,
He led them, where was heard the forge
And the strong hammer's stroke.

And beneath lofty windows dim
In many a doleful row,
Whence came the jangle of quick looms,
Down to the courts below.

Still on the children, terrified,
With wildered spirits passed;
Until of these great mammon halls,
They reached the heart at last,—
A little chamber hot and dim,
With iron bars made fast.

There sate the kinsman, shrunk and lean,
And leaden-eyed and old,
Busied before a lighted lamp
In sealing bags of gold.

The moment that they entered in,
He clutched with pallid fear
His heavy bags, as if he thought
That sudden thieves were near.

"Rich man!" said Marien, "ope thy bags
And of thy gold be free,

Make gladsome cheer, for Heaven hath sent
A blessing unto thee!"
"What!" said the miser, "is there news
Of my lost Argosy?"

"Better than gold, or merchant-ships,
Is that which thou shalt win,"
Said Marien, "thine immortal soul
From its black load of sin.

"Look at these children, thine own blood,"
And then their name she told;
"Open thine heart to do them good,
To love them more than gold;—
And what thou givest will come back
To thee, a thousand-fold!"

"Ah," said the miser, "even these
Some gainful work may do,
My looms stand still; of youthful hands
I have not half enow;
I shall have profit in their toil;
Yes, child, thy words are true!"

"Thou fool!" said Marien, "still for gain,
To cast thy soul away!
The Lord be judge 'twixt these and thee
Upon his reckoning day!
"These little one's are fatherless,—
He sees them day and night;
And as thou doest unto them,
On thee he will requite!"

"Gave I not alms upon a time?"
Said he with anger thrilled;
"And when I die, give I not gold,
A stately church to build?

"What would'st thou more? my flesh and blood
I seek not to gainsay.
But what I give, is it unmeet
Their labour should repay!"

So saying, in an iron chest,
He locked his bags of gold.
And bade the children follow him,
In accents harsh and cold.

Part Ten.

"Oh leave us not, sweet Marien!"
The little children spake;
"For if thou leave us here, alone,
Our wretched hearts will break."

She left them not—kind Marien!
And in a noisome room,
Day after day, week after week,
They laboured at the loom.

The while they thought with longing souls
Upon the breezy strand,
The flying shuttles, to and fro,
Passed through each little hand.

The while they thought with aching hearts,
Upon their parents dear,
The growing web was watered,
With many a bitter tear.

And the sweet memory of the past,—
The white sands stretching wide;
Their father's boat wherein they played,
Upon the rocking tide;

The sandy shells; the sea-mew's scream;
The ocean's ceaseless boom;
Came to them like a troubling dream,
Within the noisy loom.

Wo-worth those children, hard bested,
A weary life they knew;
Their hands were thin; their cheeks were pale,
That were of rosy hue.

The miser kinsman in and out
Passed ever and anon;
Nor ever did he speak a word,
Except to urge them on.

Wo-worth those children, hard bested,
They worked the livelong day;
Nor was there one, save Marien,
A soothing word to say:—
So, amid toil and pain of heart,
The long months wore away.

The long, the weary months passed on,
And the hard kinsman told
Over his profits; every loom
Increased the hoard of gold;
'Tis well!" said he, "let more be spun,
That more may yet be sold!"

So passed the time; and with the toil
Of children weak and poor,
The sordid kinsman's treasure-hoards
Increased more and more.

But ere a year was come and gone,
The spirit of the boy
Was changed; with natures fierce and rude
He found his chiefest joy.

The hardness of the kinsman's soul
Wrought on him like a spell,
Exciting in his outraged heart,
Revenge and hatred fell;
The will impatient of control;
The spirit to rebel.

Hence was there warfare 'twixt the two,
The weak against the strong;—
A hopeless, miserable strife
That could not last for long:
How can the young, the poor, contend
Against the rich man's wrong!

The tender trouble of his eye,
Was gone; his brow was cold;
His speech, like that of desperate men,
Was reckless, fierce, and bold.

No more he kissed his sister's cheek;
Nor soothed her as she wept;
No more he said at Marien's knee
His prayer's before he slept.

But they, the solitary pair,
Like pitying angels, poured
Tears for the sinner; and with groans
His evil life deplored.

Man knew not of that secret grief,
Which in their bosoms lay;
And for the sinful brother's sin,
Yet harder doom had they.

But God, who trieth hearts; who knows
The springs of human will;
Who is a juster judge than man,
Of mortal good and ill;

He saw those poor despised ones,
And willed them still to mourn;
He saw the wandering prodigal,
Yet bade him not return.

In his good time that weak one's woe,
Would do its work of grace;
And the poor prodigal, himself,
Would seek the father's face;—
Meantime man's judgment censured them,
As abject, mean, and base.

The erring brother was away,
And none could tell his fate;
And the young sister at the loom,
Sate drooping, desolate.

She mourned not for her parents dead,
Nor for the breezy shore:
And now the weary, jangling loom
Distracted her no more.

Like one that worketh in a dream,
So worked she day by day,

Intent upon the loving grief,
Which on her spirit lay;
And as she worked, and as she grieved,
Her young life wore away.

And they who saw her come and go,
Oft said, with pitying tongue,
"Alas, that labour is the doom,
Of aught so weak and young!'

Alone the kinsman pitied not;
He chid her, that no more
The frame was strong, the hand was swift,
As it had been before.

—All for the child was dark on earth,
When holy angels bright
Unbarred the golden gates of heaven
For her one winter's night.

Within a chamber poor and low,
Upon a pallet bed,
She lay, and "hold my hand, sweet friend,"
With feeble voice she said.

"Oh hold my hand, sweet Marien,"
The dying child spake low;
"And let me hear thy blessed voice,
To cheer me as I go!

"'Tis darksome all—Oh, drearly dark!
When will this gloom pass by?
Is there no comfort for the poor,
And for the young who die!"

Down by her side knelt Marien,
And kissed her fading cheek,
Then of the loving Saviour,
In low tones 'gan to speak.

She told of Lazarus, how he lay,
A beggar mean and poor,
And died, in misery and want,
Beside the rich man's door.

Yet how the blessed angels came,
To bear his soul on high,
Within the glorious courts of heaven,
On Abraham's breast to lie.

She told how children, when they die,
Yet higher glory win,
And see the Father face to face,
Unsoiled by tainting sin.

"Blessed be God!" the child began,
"I doubt not, neither fear,
All round about the bed, behold,
The angel-bands appear!

"I go!—yet still, dear Marien,
One last boon let me win!—
Seek out the poor lost prodigal,
And bring him back from sin!

"I go! I go!"—and angels bright,
The spirit bare away:—
On earth 'twas darksome, dreary night,
In heaven 'twas endless day!

—And now, upon that selfsame night,
Within a carved bed,
Lay the rich kinsman wrapped in lawn,
With pillows 'neath his head.

Scheming deep schemes of gold, he lay
All in that lordly room;
Blessing himself that he had stores
For many years to come.

Just then an awful form spake low,
A form that none might see:
"Thou fool, this very night thy soul,
Shall be required of thee!"

And when into that chamber fair,
Stole in the morning-ray,
A lifeless corpse, upon his bed,
The miser kinsman lay.

—Beside his door stood solemn mutes;
And chambers high and dim,
Where hung was pall, and mourning lights
Made show of grief for him.

Full fifty muffled mourners stood,
Around the scutcheoned bed,
That held the corse, as if, indeed,
A righteous man were dead.

Within a tomb, which he had built,
Of costly marble-stone,
They buried him, and plates of brass
His name and wealth made known.

A coffin of the meanest wood,
The little child received;
And o'er her humble, nameless grave,
No hooded mourner grieved.

Only kind Marien wept such tears,
As the dear Saviour shed,
When in the house at Bethany
He mourned for Lazarus dead.

Part Eleven.

Now from the miser kinsman's house
Came many a jovial sound;
And lavish heirs had spent his gold,
Ere twelve months had gone round.

That while within the busy town
Dwelt Marien; and each day,
In some good deed of christian love
And mercy, passed away.

For many an abject dweller there,
Grief-bowed and labour-spent,
Groaned forth, amid his little ones,
To heaven his sad lament;
And unto such, to raise, to cheer,
The sent of God, she went.

But she who, even as they, was poor,
Failed not of daily bread;
A stranger, many took her in,
And warmed, and clothed, and fed.

And when a sickness sore befel,
And nigh to death she lay,
Kind hearts there were who came to her,
And watched her night and day.

And afterwards, when evil men
Doomed her in bonds to lie,

Many a true, noble friend arose,
Willing for her to die.

Oh, blessed christian hearts, who thus
Unto this little one
Did deeds of love; for as to Christ
These righteous works were done!
And they who blessed her, for themselves
A tenfold blessing won!

Thus dwelt sweet Marien in the town
For many a passing year;
Yet of the poor, lost prodigal
No tidings could she hear.

She found him not; but yet she found
Others who, even as he,
Had gone astray and pined forlorn
In hopeless misery.

To these repentant, outcast ones,
She spake kind words of grace,
And led them back, with yearning hearts,
To seek the Father's face;

To find forgiveness in His heart,
And love in His embrace.

Oh blessed, blessed Marien!
—But let us now recall
Whate'er had happed of change and woe
Unto the prodigal.

He saw his little sister pine;
He saw her silent woe;
He saw her strength decline, yet still
Her weary labour grow.

As this he saw, yet more and more
He hated that hard man,
With whom their cheerless misery,
Their daily tasks began.

And even to true Marien,
He bare an altered mind;—
Alas, that injuries should make
Else loving hearts unkind!

But so it is! and when the twain
To cheer his spirit strove,
His wrath arose, and he repelled
Their patient deeds of love.

Then evil men assailed his youth;
And he who was so frail
In suffering, 'gainst the tempter's might
Was feeble to prevail.

He was their easy prey; their tool;
And bravely clothed and fed,
In desperate scenes, mid desperate men,
A lawless life he led.

Yet often to his soul came back
Sweet memory of the time,
When he, a happy, thoughtless child,
Had knowledge of no crime.

And like a heavier, wearier woe,
Than labour night and day,
The consciousness of evil deeds
Upon his spirit lay.

He thought of slighted Marien,
And of the sister meek;
Of the thin hands that plied the loom,
And of the fading cheek;

Yet how he had deserted them,
The faithful and the weak!

He heard his loving parents' voice
Reproach him in his sleep;
And conscience, that stern bosom-guest,
Ceaseless upbraidings keep.

Yet, for the hated kinsman's sake,
Neither would he regard;
And, because man was hard to him,
Made his own nature hard.

Thus doing outrage to his soul,
By chance he went one day
Through the brown trodden church-yard, where
The little sister lay.

A sexton there at work he found;
And why he turned the mould
So carefully, he asked, since there
No name the tenant told.

Replied he, "In this wide church-yard
I know each separate mound;
Yet unto me that little grave
Alone seems holy ground."

And then he told of Marien,
And how she there had wept
Over the child, that 'neath the mould,
In dreamless quiet slept.

"A little, friendless pauper child,
She lieth here," said he;
"Yet not a grave in all the ground
Like this affecteth me!"

Saying this, he wiped a tear aside,
And turned from the place;
And, in the skirts of his rich robe,
The brother hid his face.

—He left the town; and in a ship,
Bound for a far-off strand,
He took his voyage; but distress
Pursued her from the land.

At first disease was 'mong her men;
And suffering long and sore,
In midst of joyless, suffering mates,
Forlorn and sad he bore.

Next mutiny brake forth; and then
That miserable ship,
As if there were no port for her,
Without a wind the sails to stir,
Lay moveless on the deep.

As Jonah, fleeing from the Lord,
The soul-struck penitent
Lay self-condemned, believing all
On his account were sent.

Anon a tempest rose, and drove
The ship before the gale,
For three long days, and bore away
Her rudder, mast, and sail.

On the fourth night dark land appeared,
And the strained vessel bore
Right on the rocky reef, and lay
A wreck upon the shore.

At day-break only he remained
To note the vessel's fate;—
The Crusoe of a desert isle,
Abject and desolate.

—The world went on as it was wont;
And in the city street,
And in the busy market-place,
Did thronging thousands meet.

Upon the hearths of poor men's homes
Good neighbours met at night;
And kindness and companionship
Made woe and labour light.

The loneliest hut among the hills
To human hearts was known;
And even in kingly palaces
Men might not dwell alone.

The world went on as was its wont;
And no man knew the while
Of that poor lonely prodigal,
Upon his lonely isle.

He clomb the cliffs to look afar
  Over the distant sea;
If, please God, for his rescuing
  A coming sail might be.

He lit his beacon fires at night;
  He hoisted signals high;—
But the world went on as it was wont,
  And not a ship sailed by.

He was not missed among his kind,—
  Man had forgot his name;
But unto Him who cares for all,
Who sees the little sparrow fall,
  His lonely misery came.

God saw him; saw his broken heart,
  His cheerless solitude,
Saw how his human pride was gone,
  His human will subdued.

Saw him and loved him. Broken heart,
  Look up! the Father's voice
Calleth thee from thy depths of woe,
  And biddeth thee rejoice!

—Now Marien from the trading town
Had voyaged; sent of Heaven
She knew not whither; and the ship,
Which with long storm had striven,
At length upon a glorious isle
Amid the seas was driven;

Where dwelt a gentle race at rest
Amid their flowery wilds,
Unknown to all the world, with hearts
As simple as a child's.

With them abode sweet Marien;
But now it chanced one day
As in a slender carved boat
Upon the shore she lay,
A strong wind came, and filled the sail,
And bare her thence away.

She had no fear, true Marien;—
That God was good, she knew,
And even then had sent her forth
Some work of love to do.

The prodigal upon his rock
Was kneeling, and his prayer
For confidence in heaven, arose
Upon the evening air,
Just as the little boat approached
The island bleak and bare.

The boat ran up a creek, as if
'Twere steered by angels good;
And ere the evening prayer was done
Beside the youth she stood.

The chiefest joy it hath not words
Its deep excess to say;
And as if he had seen a sprite,
His spirit died away.

Then with clasped hands, and broken speech,
And tears that ceaseless flowed;
He poured forth from his full heart
A fervent praise of God.

Part Twelve.

"But let us hence," said Marien;
And with the earliest morn,
Within the slender carved boat,
They left that isle forlorn.

A light breeze from the desert shore
Over the waters blew,
And the little boat sailed on before,
Till the isle was out of view.

As friends long parted, met once more,
They sat; and of times gone,
And of the blessed dead conversed,
As the slender boat sailed on.

And as they sailed, sweet Marien
Over the gospel bent,
And read of joy that is in heaven
O'er sinners that repent;

And of the weary prodigal
Returning bowed with shame,
And the good father hastening forth
To meet him as he came;

And how he bade the fairest robe
Be brought; the golden ring;
Shoes for the feet; and music sweet,
As if to hail a king.

"For this, my son," said he, "was dead,
And is alive; is found,
Who was long lost; 'tis meet, therefore,
That stintless joy abound!"

" Oh, child of woe," said Marien,
" Look up, for thou art he;
And round about the Father's throne
Many rejoice for thee!"

" Oh Lord, I bless thee," said the youth,
" That of thy mercy great,
Thou hast vouchsafed to rescue me
From my forlorn estate!
And henceforth, to thy work of love
Myself I dedicate!

" The meanest of thy creatures, low
I bend before thy throne,
And offer my poor self to make
Thy loving-kindness known!

" Oh Father, give me words of power,
The stony hearts to move;
Give me prevailing eloquence,
To publish forth thy love!

" Thy love which wearieth not; which like
Thy sun, on all doth shine!

Oh Father, let me worship Thee
Through life, by gladly serving Thee!
I love not life; I ask not wealth;
My heart and soul, my youth and health,
My life, oh Lord, are thine!"

So spake the youth; but now the boat
The glorious island neared,
Which, like a cloudland realm of bliss,
Above the sea appeared.

Skyward rose sunny peaks, pale-hued,
As if of opal glow;
And crested palms, broad-leaved and tall,
In valleys grew below.

A lovely land of flowers, as fair
As Paradise, ere sin
And sorrow, that corrupting pair,
With death had entered in.
A lovely land!—"And even now,"
Cried Marien, "see they come,
Children of love, my brother, now,
To bid thee welcome home!

"For these, God kept thee in the wild,
From sinful men apart;
For these, his people, through distress
Made pure thy trusting heart!

"Thy work is here! Go forth, mid these
Meek children of the sun,
Oh servant of the Lord, and tell
What He for thee hath done!"

Down to the shore the thousands came,
A joyous, peaceful host,
To welcome Marien back, whom they
Had sorrowed for as lost.

"And welcome to thee, little child!"
They sang forth sweet and clear;
"And welcome to the stranger poor,
Who cometh with thee here!"

And then they brought him silken cloth,
Since he was meanly drest;
And juicy, mellow fruits to eat,
And perfumed waters for his feet,
And mats whereon to rest.

And ever as they served him,
They sang forth sweet and low,
"Would this repose might solace thee,
These apples cure thy woe!"

And though the twain knew not their speech,
Yet well they understood
The looks of love that welcomed them,
Their actions kind and good.

With them for many a year abode
The youth, and learned their tongue;
And with the sound of christian praise
The hills and valleys rung.

Oh beautiful, beyond all lands
That lay beneath the moon,
Was that fair isle of christian love
Of christian virtues boon.

A joyful people there they dwelt,
Unsuffering from their birth:
Of simplest life; benignly wise;
As angels on the earth.

And with them dwelt the holy youth,
Their chief, their priest, their friend,
Beloved and loving, for their sakes
Willing himself to spend.

Like to some ancient church of Christ,
From worldly taint kept free,
Lay this delicious isle of love
Amid its summer sea.

But now the work he had to do
Was done; and ere his day
Approached its noon, his strength, his life,
Was wearing fast away.

They saw his cheek grow thin and pale;
His loving eye grow dim;
And with surpassing tenderness
They sorrowed over him.

Old men, and youths, and women meek,
And children wild and young,
Followed his steps with watchful care,
And weeping round him hung.

In flowery thickets of the hills
Sad mourners knelt in prayer,
That God this servant so revered,
This friend beloved would spare.

And round about his feet they sat,
Observant, meek, and still,
To gather up his latest words,
To do his slightest will.

Now all this while good Marien
Had wandered far and wide,
Through divers realms, for many a year,
The hand of heaven her guide.

And now unto the glorious isle
She came; but on the shore
She saw no wondering company,
As she had seen before.

'Twas Sabbath eve, and o'er the isle
A solemn stillness lay;
A stillness, how unlike the calm
Of many a Sabbath day!

A hush, as of suspended breath,
Ere some great grief began;
For the mournful people silently
Stood round the dying man.

Through the still vales went Marien,
And came at length to where,
Mid flowering trees, knelt many a one
In agony of prayer.

Onward she went, not many steps,
With heart of mournful ruth,
When, like a dying angel laid,
She saw the holy youth.

With closed eyes and pallid lips
He lay, as one whose life
Meeteth with death, yet waiteth still
The last conflicting strife.

Beside him knelt she on the turf,
And spoke in accents low,
Words of strong love, which like new life
Seemed through the frame to go.

He raised himself, and blessing God,
That He of him had care,
And now in his dark trial-hour,
Had sent his angel there;

With low-toned voice, more musical
Than softest lute could make,
Looking upon his weeping friends
With fervent love he spake.

"Oh friends, beloved friends! weep not,
Nor be oppressed with woe;
'Tis of His will, who doeth right,
That I am called to go!

"Fain would I tarry, but the cry
Hath sounded in mine ear,
'Haste to depart, the Lord hath need
Of thee no longer here!'

"Even like the Master whom I serve,
I pray ye not to grieve;
But as ye have believed in me,
Also in Him believe!

"I go, but leave you not forlorn,
As sheep without a guide;—
For Christ, the unfailing Comforter,
Shall still with you abide!

"Oh weep not, friends; a better home
Awaits me, and I go,
But to that home which is prepared
For ye who love me so!
Farewell, farewell! Unto my God,
And unto yours, I go!"

The Sabbath sun went down amid
A golden, cloudless sky;
And the freed spirit, cleansed from sin,
Arose to God on high.

Beneath the trees where he had died,
They buried him, and there
Enwove the flowery boughs to form
A quiet house of prayer.

Long time with them dwelt Marien,
Until she was sent forth,

At the Lord's bidding, to perform
New service on the earth.

Good speed to thee, thou blessed child,
May angels guide thy bark,
Mid slumbrous calm, mid tempests wild,
And o'er the waters dark!

Good speed to thee, thou blessed child,
The angel of the poor—
And win from sorrow and from sin
The world from shore to shore!

OLD CHRISTMAS.

NOW he who knows old Christmas,
He knows a carle of worth;
For he is as good a fellow
As any upon the earth!

He comes warm cloaked and coated,
And buttoned up to the chin,
And soon as he comes a-nigh the door,
We open and let him in.

We know that he will not fail us,
So we sweep the hearth up clean;
We set him the old armed chair,
And a cushion whereon to lean.

And with sprigs of holly and ivy
We make the house look gay,
Just out of an old regard to him,—
For it was his ancient way.

We broach the strong ale barrel,
And bring out wine and meat;
And thus have all things ready,
Our dear old friend to greet.

And soon as the time wears round,
The good old carle we see,
Coming a-near;—for a creditor
Less punctual is than he!

He comes with a cordial voice
That does one good to hear;
He shakes one heartily by the hand,
As he hath done many a year.

And after the little children
He asks in a cheerful tone,
Jack, Kate, and little Annie,—
He remembers them every one!

What a fine old fellow he is!
With his faculties all as clear,
And his heart as warm and light
As a man's in his fortieth year!

What a fine old fellow, in troth!
Not one of your griping elves,
Who, with plenty of money to spare,
Think only about themselves!

Not he! for he loveth the children;
And holiday begs for all;
And comes with his pockets full of gifts,
For the great ones and the small!

With a present for every servant;—
For in giving he doth not tire;—
From the red-faced, jovial butler,
To the girl by the kitchen-fire.

And he tells us witty old stories;
And singeth with might and main;
And we talk of the old man's visit
Till the day that he comes again!

Oh, he is a kind, old fellow;
For though that beef be dear,
He giveth the parish paupers
A good dinner once a year!

And all the workhouse children
He sets them down in a row,
And giveth them rare plum-pudding,
And two-pence a-piece also.

Oh, could you have seen those paupers,
Have heard those children young,
You would wish with them that Christmas
Came often and tarried long!

He must be a rich old fellow,—
What money he gives away!
There is not a lord in England
Could equal him any day!

Good luck unto old Christmas,
And long life, let us sing,
For he doth more good unto the poor
Than many a crowned king!

THE TWELFTH HOUR.

My friends, the spirit is at peace;
Oh do not trouble me with tears:
Petition rather my release,
Nor covet for me length of years,
Which are but weariness and woe;
Resign me, friends, before I go!

I know how strong are human ties;
I know how strong is human fear;
But visions open to mine eyes,
And words of power are in mine ear;
My friends, my friends, can ye not see,
Not hear what voices speak to me?

"Thou human soul," they seem to say,
"We are commissioned from above,
Through the dark portal to convey
Thee to the paradise of love;
Thou need'st not shrink, thou need'st not fear
We, thy sure help, are gathered near!

" Thy weakness on our strength confide;
Thy doubt upon our stedfast trust;
And rise up, pure and glorified,
From thine infirm and sinful dust.
Rise up, rise up! the eternal day
Begins to dawn—why wilt thou stay?

" Look forth—the day begins to dawn;
The future openeth to thy view;
The veil of mystery is undrawn;
The old things are becoming new;
The night of time is passing by:
Poor trembler, do not fear to die!

" Come, come! the gates of pearl unfold;
The eternal glory shines on thee!
Body, relax thy lingering hold,
And set the struggling spirit free!"
'Tis done, 'tis done!—before my sight
Opens the awful infinite:
I see, I hear, I live anew!
Oh friends, dear friends,—adieu, adieu!

THE BLIND BOY AND HIS SISTER.

"Oh brother," said fair Annie,
To the blind boy at her side;
"Would thou could'st see the sunshine lie
On hill and valley, and the sky
Hung like a glorious canopy.
O'er all things far and wide!

"Would thou could'st see the waters
In many a distant glen;
The mountain flocks that graze around;
Nay, even this patch of stony ground,
These crags, with silver lichen crowned,
I would that thou could'st ken!

"Would thou could'st see my face, brother,
As well as I see thine;
For always what I cannot see
It is but half a joy to me.
Brother, I often weep for thee,
Yet thou dost ne'er repine!"

"And why should I repine, Annie?"
Said the blind boy with a smile;
"I ken the blue sky and the grey;
The sunny and the misty day;
The moorland valley stretched away
For many and many a mile!

"I ken the night and day, Annie,
For all ye may believe;

And often in my spirit lies
A clear light as of mid-day skies;
And splendours on my vision rise,
Like gorgeous hues of eve.

"I sit upon the stone, Annie,
Beside our cottage door,
And people say, 'that boy is blind,'
And pity me, although I find
A world of beauty in my mind,
A never-ceasing store.

"I hear you talk of mountains,
The beautiful, the grand;
Of splintered peaks so grey and tall;
Of lake, and glen, and waterfall;
Of flowers and trees;—I ken them all;—
Their difference understand.

"The harebell and the gowan
Are not alike to me,
Are different as the herd and flock,
The blasted pine-tree of the rock,
The waving birch, the broad, green oak,
The river, and the sea.

"And oh, the heavenly music,
That as I sit alone,
Comes to mine inward sense as clear
As if the angel-voices were
Singing to harp and dulcimer
Before the mighty Throne!

"It is not as of outward sound,
Of breeze, or singing bird;
But wondrous melody refined;
A gift of God unto the blind;
An inward harmony of mind,
By inward senses heard!

"And all the old-world stories
That neighbours tell o' nights;
Of fairies on the fairy mound,
Of brownies dwelling under ground,
Of elves careering round and round,
Of fays and water-sprites;

All this to me is pleasantness,—
Is all a merry show;

I see the antic people play,—
Brownie and kelpie, elf and fay,
In a sweet country far away,
Yet where I seem to go.

"But better far than this, Annie,
Is when thou read'st to me
Of the dear Saviour meek and kind,
And how he healed the lame and blind,
Am I not healed?—for in my mind
His blessed form I see!

"Oh, love is not of sight, Annie,
Is not of outward things;
For, in my inmost soul I know,
His pity for all mortal woe;
His words of love, spoke long ago,
Unseal its deepest springs!

"Then do not mourn for me, Annie,
Because that I am blind;—
The beauty of all outward sight;
The wondrous shows of day and night;
All love, all faith, and all delight,
Are strong in heart and mind!"

THE SPIRIT'S QUESTIONINGS.

Where shall I meet thee,
Thou beautiful one?
Where shall I find thee,
For aye who art gone?

What is the shape
To thy clear spirit given?
Where is thy home
In the infinite heaven?

I see thee, but still
As thou wert upon earth,
In thy bodied delight,
In thy wonder and mirth!

But now thou art one
Of the glorified band,
Who have touched the shore
Of the far spirit-land!

And thy shape is fair,
  And thy locks are bright,
In the living stream
  Of the quenchless light.

And thy spirit's thought
  It is pure, and free
From darkness and doubt
  And from mystery!

And thine ears have drunk
  The awful tone
Of the First and Last,
  Of the Ancient One!

And the dwellers old
  Thy steps have met,
Where the lost is found,
  And the past is yet.

Where shall I find thee,
  For aye who art gone?
Where shall I meet thee,
  Thou beautiful one?

THE POOR CHILD'S HYMN.

We are poor and lowly born;
With the poor we bide;
Labour is our heritage,
Care and want beside.
What of this? our blessed Lord
Was of lowly birth,
And poor, toiling fishermen
Were his friends on earth!

We are ignorant and young;
Simple children all;
Gifted with but humble powers,
And of learning small.
What of this? our blessed Lord
Loved such as we;—
How he blessed the little ones
Sitting on his knee!

A DREAM.

Hoar with the lapse of ages seemed
The silent land toward which I drew;
And yet within myself I deemed
The dwellers in that land were few.
A strong conviction seemed to rest
Upon my heart that I was then
In the sole portion of the earth,
Which since creation's perfect birth,
Had held the sons of men;
And I was on a marvelling quest
Of that small colony of the blest.

How lone, how silent! not a sound
In earth or air, from wind or flood;
But o'er the bare and barren ground
Brooded an endless solitude.

It was an awful thing to tread
O'er grey and parched and mighty plains,
Where never living thing was seen,
Where the live heart had never been:
The blood chilled in my veins,—
Yet still I felt in spirit led
Across that wilderness of dread.

But lo! that deadness of the world,
Which seemed of an eternal power,
Like a light vapour was unfurled,
And I walked over fern and flower;
Hills, robed in light celestial blue,
Bounded that amplitude of plain;
And round me there were lofty trees,
Yet moveless, soundless to the breeze;
And not a wild bird's strain,
Nor cry of beast, could still undo
The spell which silence o'er me threw.

But man was there. Not far aside
One I beheld who strongly toiled;
He seemed a youth of solemn pride,
Of noble form, but dimmed and soiled

With rural labour and with care,
And he clove wood for sacrifice.
I listened for his sounding stroke,
There was no sound; and now the smoke
Did from the pile arise;
And he gazed on it with an air
Less marked by pleasure than despair.

But then a lovelier vision sprung
Before me; and between the tall
And shadowy trees, a low cloud hung,
So low, it scarcely hung at all;
'Twas like no cloud which sails the sky;
Around it all was clearly seen;
It mixed not with the ambient air;
Rolled on itself compact and fair,
It rested on the scene,
More still and motionless than lie
The clouds of summer in the sky.

Beside it stood a hoary seer,
And through my heart a whisper ran,
"God, or his angel shrouded here,
Holds converse with this holy man."

Dark was that cloudy dwelling-place;
No glory on it seemed to dwell;
Yet still on every thing around,
On tree, on shrub, and heathy ground,
A streaming radiance fell;
And on that patriarch's awful face
Glowed with intense, unearthly grace.

Propped on his staff, in peace he stood,
Sandaled, and girdled in his vest,
And his full beard in silver flowed
Far down his pure and quiet breast;
His eye was on the cloud, as one
Who listens to momentous things,
And seems with reverence to hear,
Yet with more confidence than fear,
What some great herald brings.

But as I gazed, a little boat,
Swift, without rudder, oars, or sail,
Down through the ambient air afloat,
Bore onward one who seemed to hail
The patriarch,—and he turned his head;
He turned and saw a smiling boy,

Smiling in beauty and in youth,
With eyes in which eternal truth
Lay with eternal joy.
He touched that old man's snowy head,
And boat, youth, cloud, and patriarch fled!

A multitude of dreams have passed
Since this, and perished as they came;
But in my mind imprinted fast
This lives, and still remains the same.
The beauty of that gliding car;
The mystery of the cloud and sage;
Those plains in arid drought so stern;
That solemn hush, that seemed etern;—
In memory's living page,
Still stand in light, more real far
Than thousands of our day-dreams are!

THE BOY OF THE SOUTHERN ISLE.

AN OLD SEAMAN'S STORY.

Part First.

I'LL tell ye, if ye hearken now,
A thing that chanced to me—
It must be fifty years agone—
Upon the southern sea.

First-mate was I of the Nancy,
A tight ship and a sound;
We had made a prosperous voyage,
And then were homeward bound.

We were sailing on the Tropic seas,
Before the trade-wind's power;
Day after day, without delay,
Full thirteen knots an hour.

The sea was as a glassy lake,
By a steady gale impressed;
There was nought for any man to do
But just what liked him best.

And yet the calm was wearisome;
The dull days idly sped;
And sometimes on a flute I played,
Or else a book I read.

And dallying thus one afternoon,
I stood upon the deck;
When far off, to the leeward,
I saw a faintish speck.

Whether 'twas rock, or fish, or cloud,
At first I did not know;
So I called unto a seaman,
That he might look also.

And as it neared, I saw for sure
That it must be a boat;
But my fellow swore it was not so,
But a large bamboo afloat.

We called a third unto us then,
That he the sight might see;
Then came a fourth, a fifth, a sixth,
But no two could agree.

"Nay, 'tis a little boat," I said,
"And it roweth with an oar!"
But none of them could see it so,
All differing as before.

"It cometh on; I see it plain;
It is a boat!" I cried,
"A little boat o'erlaid with pearl,
And a little child to guide!"

And sure enough, a boat it was,
And worked with an oar;
But such a boat as 'twas, no man
Had ever seen before.

Within it sate a little child,
The fairest e'er was seen;
His robes were like the amethyst,
His mantle of sea-green.

No covering wore he on his head,
And the hair that on it grew
Showered down in thick and wavy locks
Of the sunniest golden hue.

The rudest man on board our ship
Blest God that sight to see;
For me I could do nought but weep,
Such power had it on me.

There sat he in his pretty boat
Like an angel from the sky,
Regarding us in our great ship,
With wonder in his eye.

The little oar slid from his hand;
His sweet lips were apart;
Within my soul I felt his joy;
His wonder in my heart.

And as we tokened him to come,
His little boat he neared,
And smiled at all our friendly words,
Nor seemed the least afeared.

"Come hither a-board!" the captain said;
And without fear of ill,
He sprang into the lordly ship,
With frank and free good will.

He was no son of the merman;
No syren full of guile;
But a creature like the cherubim,
From some unknown-of isle.

And strange to tell, his pleasant speech
Was English, every word;
And yet such English, sweet and pure,
As his I never heard.

There were three, he said, who dwelt with him,
Within a tamarind-grove;
His parents and his sister young,—
A family of love.

His father, he said, had made his boat
From out a large sea-shell;
"And what a wondrous tale," said he,
"I shall this evening tell!"

His robes, he said, his mother had wove
From roots of an Indian-tree;
And he laughed at the clothes the seamen wore,
With the merriest mockery.

When the little child had stayed with us,
May-be an hour or so,
He smiled farewell to all on board,
And said that he would go.

"For I must be back again," said he,
"For me they all will wait;
I must be back again," quoth he,
"Or ever the day be late!"

"He shall not go!" the captain said;
"Haul up his boat and oar!
The pretty boy shall sail with us
To the famous English shore!

"Thou shalt with me, my pretty boy;
I'll find thee a new mother;—
I've children three at home, and thou
To them shalt be a brother!"

"Nay, nay, I shall go back!" he said;
"For thee I do not know;—
I must be back again," he cried,
"Before the sun be low!"
Then sprang unto the vessel's side,
And made as he would go.

The captain was a strong, stern man;
None liked him overwell;
And to a seaman standing near,
Said he, with voice and look austere,
"Haul up yon cockle-shell!
And you, my boy, content you,
In this good ship to dwell!"

As one who gladly would believe
Some awful threat a joke,
So heard the child, with half a smile,
The words the captain spoke.

But when he saw them seize his boat,
And put his oar away,
The smile was gone, and o'er his face
Quick passed a pale dismay.

And then a passion seized his frame,
As if he were possessed;
He stamped his little feet in rage,
And smote upon his breast.

'Twas a wicked deed as e'er was done—
I longed to set him free;
And the impotence of his great grief
Was a grievous sight to me.

At length, when rage had spent itself,
His lofty heart gave way,
And, falling on his pretty knees,
At the captain's feet he lay.

"Oh take me back again!" he cried,
"Let me not tarry here,
And I'll give thee sea-apples,
And honey rich and clear;

"And fetch thee heavy pearl-stones
From deep sea-caves below;
And red tree-gold and coral-tree,
If thou wilt let me go!

"Or if I must abide with thee,—
In thy great ship to dwell,
Let me but just go back again,
To bid them all farewell!"

And at the word "farewell" he wept,
As if his heart would break;
The very memory of his tears
Sore sad my heart doth make.

The captain's self was almost moved
To hear his woful cry;
And there was not within the ship
One man whose eyes were dry.

When the captain saw the seamen's grief,
An angry man was he,
And shut his heart against the child,
For our great sympathy.

Down from the deck he took him
To his cabin all alone;
We saw him not for many a day,
But only heard his moan.

Part Second.

It was a wicked deed, and heaven
All wickedness doth hate;
And vengeance on the oppressor,
It cometh soon or late,—

As you will see. There something was,
Even from the very night
Whereon the captain stole the child,
On board that was not right.

From out the cabin evermore,
Where they were all alone,
We heard, oh piteous sounds to hear,
A low and quiet moan;
And now and then cries sad enough
To move a heart of stone.

The captain had a conscious look,
Like one who doeth wrong,
And yet who striveth all the time
Against a conscience strong.

The seamen did not work at all
With a good will or a free;
And the ship, as she were sullen too,
Went slowly over the sea.
'Twas then the captain from below
Sent down in haste for me.

I found him lying on his bed,
Oppressed with fever-pain;
And by his death-struck face, I saw
That he would not rise again,—
That he, so lately hale and strong,
Would never rise again.

"I have done wickedly," said he,
"And Christ doth me condemn;—
I have children three on land," groaned he,
"And woe will come to them!

"I have been weighed, and wanting found;
I've done an evil deed!—
I pray thee, mate, 'tis not too late,
Take back this child with speed!

"I have children three," again groaned he,
"And I pray that this be done;—
Thou wilt have order of the ship
When I am dead and gone:—
I pray thee do the thing I ask,
That mercy may be won!"

I vowed to do the thing he asked,
Upon the Testament;
And, true enough, that very day
To his account he went.

I took the little child away,
And set him on my knee,

In the free fresh air upon the deck,
But he spoke no word to me.

I feared at first that all his grief
Had robbed him of his speech,
And that I ne'er, by word or look,
His sunken soul could reach.

At length he woke from that dead woe,
Like one that long hath slept,
And cast his arms about my neck,
And long and freely wept.

I clasped him close unto my breast,
Yet knew not what to say,
To wile from him the misery
That on his spirit lay.

At length I did bethink me
Of Jesus Christ; and spake
To that poor lamb of all the woe
He suffered for our sake.

"For me and thee, dear child," I said,
"He suffered, and be sure
He will not lay a pang on thee
Without he give the cure!"

Like as the heavy clouds of night
Pass from the coming day,
So cleared the sullen weight of woe
From his dear soul away.

Oh happy hours of converse sweet;—
The Christian's hope he knew,
And with an eager heart he gained
That knowledge sweet and new.

And ever by my side he kept,
Loving, and meek, and still:
But never more to him returned
His bold and wayward will:—
He had been tried and purified
From every taint of ill.

Part Third.

The eve whereon the captain died
I turned the ship about,
And said unto the seamen good,
"We'll find the island out."

So back unto the place we came,
Where we the child had found;
And two full days with anxious watch,
We sailed it all around.

And on the third, at break of day,
A far-off peak was seen;
And then the low-lands rose to view,
All woody, rich, and green.

Down on his knees the child he fell,
When the mountains came in view,
And tears ran streaming from his eyes,—
For his own isle he knew.

And, with a wildly-piercing tone,
He cried, "Oh, mother dear,
Weep not,—I come, my mother!"
Long, long ere she could hear.

And soon we saw a mountain-top
Whereon a beacon burned;
Then as the good ship neared the land,
An answer was returned.

"Oh, give to me my boat!" he cried,
"And give to me mine oar!"
Just then we saw another boat
Pushed from the island-shore.

A carved boat of sandal-wood,
Its sail a silken mat,
All richly wrought in rainbow-dyes,
And three within her sat.

Down from the ship into the sea
The little boy he sprung;
And the mother gave a scream of joy
With which the island rung,

Like some sea-creature beautiful
He swam the ocean-tide,
And ere we wondered at his skill
He clomb the shallop's side.

Next moment in his mother's arms
He lay, O sweet embrace!
Looking from her dear bosom up
Into her loving face.

The happiest and the sweetest sight
That e'er mine eyes will see,
Was the coming back of this poor child
Unto his family!

—Now wot ye of his parentage?
Sometime I'll tell you it:
Of meaner matter many a time
Has many a book been writ.

'Twould make a pleasant history
Of joy scarce touched by woe,
Of innocence and love; but now
This only must you know.

His mother was of English birth,
  Well-born, and young, and fair;
In the wreck of an East-Indiaman
  She had been saved there.

His father was the island's chief,
  Goodly as man can be;
Adam, methinks, in Paradise
  Was such a one as he.

'Tis not for my weak speech to tell
  The joy so sweet and good,
Of these kind, simple islanders,
  Nor all their gratitude.

Whate'er the island held they gave;
  Delicious fruits and wines,
Rich-tinted shells from out the sea,
  And ore from out their mines.

But I might not stay; and that same day
  Again we turned about,
And, with the wind that changed then
  Went from the harbour out.

—'Tis joy to do an upright deed;
'Tis joy to do a kind;
And the best reward of virtuous deeds
Is the peace of one's own mind.

But a blessing great went with the ship,
And with the freight she bore;
The pearl-shells turned to great account,
So did the island's ore;—
But I someway lost my reckoning,
Nor found the island more.

And how the child became a man,
Or what to him befel,
As I never trod the island more,
Is not for me to tell.

EASTER HYMNS.

Hymn First.

THE TWO MARYS.

Oh dark day of sorrow,
Amazement and pain;
When the promise was blighted,
The given was ta'en!

When the master no longer
A refuge should prove;
And evil was stronger
Than mercy and love!

Oh dark day of sorrow,
Abasement and dread,
When the Master beloved
Was one with the dead!

We sate in our anguish
Afar off to see,
For we surely believed not
This sorrow could be!

But the trust of our spirits
Was all overthrown;
And we wept, in our anguish,
Astonished, alone!

At even they laid him
With aloes and myrrh,
In fine linen wound, in
A new sepulchre.

There, there will we seek him:
Will wash him with care;
Anoint him with spices:
And mourn for him there.

Oh strangest of sorrow!
Oh vision of fear!
New grief is around us,—
The Lord is not here!

Hymn Second.

THE ANGEL.

Women, why shrink ye
With wonder and dread?—
Seek not the living
Where slumbers the dead!

Weep not, nor tremble;
And be not dismayed;
The Lord hath arisen!
See where he was laid!

The grave-clothes, behold them;
The spices; the bier;
The napkin that bound him;—
But he is not here!

Death could not hold him;
The grave is a prison
That keeps not the living;
The Christ has arisen!

Hymn Third.

THE LORD JESUS.

Why are ye troubled?
Why weep ye and grieve?
What the prophets have written
Why slowly believe?

'Tis I, be not doubtful!
Why ponder ye so?
Behold in my body
The marks of my woe!

The willing hath suffered;
The chosen been slain;
The end is accomplished!
Behold me again!

Death has been conquered—
The grave has been riven—
For sin a remission
Hath freely been given!

Fearless in spirit,
Yet meek as the dove,
Go preach to the nations
This gospel of love.

For the might of the mighty
Shall o'er you be cast;
And I will be with you,
My friends, to the last!

I go to the Father,
But I will prepare
Your mansions of glory,
And welcome you there.

There life never-ending;
There bliss that endures;
There love never-changing,
My friends, shall be yours!

But the hour is accomplished!
My children, we sever—
But be ye not troubled,
I am with you for ever!

Hymn Fourth.

THE ELEVEN.

The Lord is ascending!—
Rich welcomes to give him
See, angels descending!—
The heavens receive him!

See, angels, archangels
Bend down to adore!—
The Lord hath ascended,
We see him no more!

The Master is taken;
The friend hath departed;
Yet we are not forsaken,
Nor desolate-hearted!

The master is taken;
The holy, the kind;
But the joy of his presence
Remaineth behind!

Our hearts burned within us
To hear but the word
Which he spake, ere our spirits
Acknowledged the Lord!

The Lord hath ascended!
Our hope is secure,
We trusted not lightly;—
The promise is sure!

The Lord hath ascended;
And we, his true-hearted,
Go forth with rejoicing,
Though he hath departed!

CORN-FIELDS.

In the young merry time of spring,
When clover 'gins to burst;
When blue-bells nod within the wood,
And sweet May whitens first;
When merle and mavis sing their fill,
Green is the young corn on the hill.

But when the merry spring is past,
And summer groweth bold,
And in the garden and the field
A thousand flowers unfold;
Before a green leaf yet is sere,
The young corn shoots into the ear.

But then as day and night succeed,
And summer weareth on,
And in the flowery garden beds
The red-rose groweth wan,
And holly-hock and sunflowers tall
O'ertop the mossy garden-wall:

When on the breath of autumn breeze,
  From pastures dry and brown,
Goes floating, like an idle thought,
  The fair, white thistle-down;
O, then what joy to walk at will,
Upon the golden harvest-hill!

What joy in dreamy ease to lie
  Amid a field new-shorn,
And see all round on sun-lit slopes,
  The piled-up shocks of corn,
And send the fancy wandering o'er
All pleasant harvest-fields of yore.

I feel the day; I see the field;
  The quivering of the leaves;
And good old Jacob and his house
  Binding the yellow sheaves;
And at this very hour I seem
To be with Joseph in his dream.

I see the fields of Bethlehem,
  And reapers many a one,
Bending unto their sickles' stroke,
  And Boaz looking on;

And Ruth, the Moabitess fair,
Among the gleaners stooping there.

Again, I see a little child,
His mother's sole delight;
God's living gift of love unto
The kind, good Shunamite;
To mortal pangs I see him yield,
And the lad bear him from the field.

The sun-bathed quiet of the hills;
The fields of Galilee,
That eighteen hundred years agone
Were full of corn, I see,
And the dear Saviour take his way
'Mid ripe ears on the Sabbath-day.

O golden fields of bending corn,
How beautiful they seem!—
The reaper-folk, the piled-up sheaves,
To me are like a dream;
The sunshine and the very air
Seem of old time, and take me there!

THE TWO ESTATES.

The children of the rich man, no carking care they know.
Like lilies in the sunshine, how beautiful they grow!

And well may they be beautiful; in raiment of the best,
In velvet, gold, and ermine, their little forms are drest.

With a hat and jaunty feather set lightly on their head,
And golden hair, like angels' locks, over their shoulders spread.

And well may they be beautiful; they toil not, neither spin,
Nor dig, nor delve, nor do they aught their daily bread to win.

They eat from gold and silver, all luxuries wealth can buy;
They sleep on beds of softest down, in chambers rich and high.

They dwell in lordly houses, with gardens round about,
And servants to attend them if they go in or out.

They have music for the hearing, and pictures for the eye,
And exquisite and costly things each sense to gratify.

No wonder they are beautiful! and if they chance to die,
Among dead lords and ladies, in the chancel vault they lie.

With marble tablets on the wall inscribed, that all may know,
The children of the rich man are mouldering below.

The children of the poor man, around the humble doors
They throng of city alleys and solitary moors.

In hot and noisy factories they turn the ceaseless wheel,
And eat with feeble appetite their coarse and joyless meal.

They rise up in the morning, ne'er dreaming of delight;
And weary, spent, and heart-sore, they go to bed at night.

They have no brave apparel, with golden clasp and gem;
So their clothes keep out the weather they're good enough for them.

Their hands are broad and horny; they hunger, and are cold;
They learn what toil and sorrow mean ere they are five years old.

—The poor man's child must step aside if the
rich man's child go by;
And scarcely aught may minister to his little
vanity.

And of what could he be vain? — his most
beautiful array
Is what the rich man's children have worn and
cast away.

The finely spun, the many-hued, the *new*, are
not for him,
He must clothe himself, with thankfulness, in
garments soiled and dim.

He sees the children of the rich in chariots gay
go by,
And "what a heavenly life is theirs," he sayeth
with a sigh.

Then straightway to his work he goeth, for
feeble though he be,
His daily toil must still be done to help the
family.

Thus live the poor man's children; and if they
chance to die,
In plain, uncostly coffins, 'mong common graves
they lie;

Nor monument nor head-stone their humble
names declare:—
But thou, O God, wilt not forget the poor
man's children there!

LIFE'S MATINS.

At that sweet hour of even,
When nightingales awake,
Low-bending o'er her first-born son,
An anxious mother spake.

"Thou child of prayer and blessing,
Would that my soul could know,
What the unending future holds
For thee of joy or woe.

"Thy life, will it be gladness,
A sunny path of flowers;—
Or strift, with sorrow dark as death,
Through weary, wintry hours?

"Oh child of love and blessing,
Young blossom of life's tree—
My spirit trembles but to think
What time may make of thee!

"Yet of the unveiled future
Would knowledge might be given!"
Then voices of the unseen ones
Made answer back from heaven.

FIRST VOICE.

"Tears he must shed unnumbered;
And he must strive with care,
As strives in war the armed man:
And human woe must bear.

"Must learn that joy is mockery;
That man doth mask his heart;
Must prove the trusted faithless;
And see the loved depart!

"Must feel himself alone, alone;
Must weep when none can see;
Then lock his grief, like treasure up,
For lack of sympathy.

"Must prove all human knowledge
A burden, a deceit;
And many a flattering friendship find
A dark and hollow cheat.

"Well may'st thou weep, fond mother;—
For what can life bequeath,
But tears and sighs unnumbered,
But watching, change, and death!"

SECOND VOICE.

"Rejoice, rejoice, fond mother,
That thou hast given birth,
To this immortal being,
To this sweet child of earth!

"The pearl within the ocean,
The gold within the mine,
Have not a thousandth part the worth
Of this fair child of thine!

"Oh fond and anxious mother,
Look up with joyful eyes,
For a boundless wealth of love and power
In that young spirit lies!

"Love to enfold all natures
In one benign embrace;
Power to diffuse a blessing wide
O'er all the human race!

"Bless God both night and morning;
Be thine a joyful heart;
For the child of mortal parents hath
With the Eternal part!

"The stars shall dim their brightness;
And as a parched scroll
The earth shall fade, but ne'er shall fade
The undying human soul!

"Oh then rejoice, fond mother,
That thou hast given birth
To this immortal being,
To this fair child of earth!"

THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT.

How goodly is the earth!
  Look round about and see
The green and fertile field;
  The mighty branched tree;
The little flowers out-spread
  In such variety!
Behold the lovely things
That dance on airy wings;
The birds whose summer pleasure
Is not of stinted measure;
The grassy vales, the hills;
The flower-embordered rills;
The clouds that lie at rest
Upon the noonday's breast;
  Behold all these and know,
    How goodly is the earth!

How goodly is the earth!
  Its mountain-tops behold;
Its rivers broad and strong;
  Its solemn forests old;
Its wealth of flocks and herds;
  Its precious stones and gold;
Behold the radiant isles
With which old ocean smiles;
Behold the seasons run,
Obedient to the sun;
The gracious showers descend;
Life springing without end;
By day the glorious light;
The starry pomp by night;—
  Behold all these, and know
    How goodly is the earth!

How goodly is the earth!
  Yet if this earth be made
So goodly, wherein all
  That is shall droop and fade;
Wherein the glorious light
  Hath still its fellow, shade;—

So goodly, where is strife
Ever 'twixt death and life;
Where trouble dims the eye;
Where sin hath mastery;
How much more bright and fair,
Will be that region, where
The saints of God shall rest
Rejoicing with the blessed;—
Where pain is not, nor death,—
The Paradise of God!

A LIFE'S SORROW.

AN OLD MAN'S NARRATIVE.

My life hath had its curse; and I will tell
To you its dark and troubled history.
Brethren you are; oh then as brethren dwell,
Linked soul to soul in blessed unity;
Like the rejoicing branches of a tree,
All braving storm, all sharing sunny weather,
All putting on their leaves, and withering all together.

I had a brother. As a spring of joy
Was he unto the gladness of my youth;
And in our guileless confidence, each boy,
Vowed a sweet vow of everlasting truth,
All sympathetic love, all generous ruth;
Alas! that years the noble heart should tame,
And the boy's virtue put the man to shame!

I was the elder; and as years passed on
Men paid invidious homage to the heir;
And pride, which was the sin of angels, won
Our human hearts; their guilt I will not spare:
If I was proud, the boy began to wear
A lip of scorn, and paid me back my pride,
With arrowy wit that wounded and defied.

Still he was dear to me, and I would gaze
With yearning heart upon him as he went
Past me in silent pride, and inly praised
His godlike form, and the fair lineament
Of his fine countenance, as eloquent
As if it breathed forth music; and his voice
Oh how its tones could soften and rejoice!

Strange was it, that a brother, thus my pride,
Grew to my friendship so estranged and cold;
Strange was it, that kind spirits erst allied
By kindred fellowship, so proved of old,
Were sundered and to separate interests sold!
I know not how it was; but pride was strong
In either breast and did the other wrong.

There was another cause—we fiercely strove
In an ambitious race;—but worse than all,
We met, two rival combatants in love:
My brother was the victor, and my fall,
Maddening my jealous pride, turned love to gall.
There was no lingering kindness more. We parted,
Each on his separate way, the severed-hearted.

For years we met not; met not till we stood,
Silent and moody, by our father's bed,
Each with his hatred seemingly subdued
Whilst in the presence of that reverent head:
Surely our stedfast rancour might have fled
When that good father joined our hands and smiled,
And died believing we were reconciled!

And so we might have been; but there were those
Who found advantage in our longer hate;
Who stepped between our hearts and kept us foes,
And taught that hatred was inviolate:—

Fools to be duped by such! But ah, too late
True knowledge and repentance come; and back
I look in woe upon life's blighted track!

We were the victims of the arts we scorned;
We were like clay within the potter's hand:
And so again we parted. He adorned
The courtly world: his wit and manners bland
The hearts of men and women could command.
I too ran folly's round, till tired of pleasure,
I sought repose in tranquil, rural leisure.

Ere long he left his native land, and went
Into the East with pomp and power girt round.
And so years past: the morn of life was spent,
And manhood's noon advanced with splendour crowned;
They said 'mid kingly luxury without bound,
He dwelt in joy; and that his blessings ever
Flowed like that land's unmeasured, bounteous river.

And the world worshipped him, for he was great—
Great in the council, greater in the field.
And I too had my blessings, for I sate
Amid my little ones: the fount unsealed
Of my heart's wronged affections seemed to yield
A tenfold current: and my babes, like light
Unto the captive's gaze, rejoiced my sight.

I dwelt within my home an altered man;
Again all tenderness and love was sweet,
'Twas as if fresh existence had began,
Since pleasant welcomes were sent forth to greet
My coming, and the sound of little feet
Was on my floor, and bright and loving eyes
Beamed on me without feigning a disguise.

As the chill snows of winter melt away
Before the genial spring, so from my heart
Passed hatred and revenge; and I could pray
For pardon, pardoning all; my soul was blessed
With answered love, and hopes whereon to rest

My joy in years to come; I asked no more,
The cup of that rich blessedness ran o'er.

Alas! even then the brightness of my life
Again grew dim; my fount of joy was dried;
My soul was doomed to bear a heavier strife
Than it had borne!—my children at my side
In their meek, loving beauty, dropped and died—
First they, and then their mother! Did I weep?
No, tears are not for griefs intense and deep!

Ah me! those weary days, those painful nights,
When voices from the dead were in mine ear,
And I had visions of my lost delights,
And saw the lovely and the loving near,
Then woke and knew my home so dim and drear!
What marvel if I prayed that I might die,
In my soul's great, unchastened misery!

I had known sorrow, and remorse, and shame,
But never knew I misery till that time;

And in my soul sprang up the torturing blame,
That they had died for my unpardoned crime!
Then madness followed; and my manhood's prime
Passed like a dark and hideous dream away,
Without a memory left of night or day.

I dwelt within my childhood's home, and yet
I wist not of each dear familiar place;
My soul was in a gloomy darkness set
Engulphed in deadness for a season's space,
At length light beamed; a ray of heavenly grace
Upon my bowed and darkened spirit lay,
Healing its wounds, and giving power to pray,

I rose a sorrowing man, and yet renewed;
Resigned, although abased to the dust;
I felt that God was righteous, true, and good,
And though severe in awful judgment, just;
Therefore in him I put undoubting trust,
And walked once more among my fellow-men,
Yet in their vain joys mingling not again.

My home was still a solitude; none sought
Nor found in me companion; yet I pined
For something which might win my weary thought
From its deep anguish; some strong, generous mind,
Round which my lorn affections might be twined;
Some truthful heart on which mine own might lean,
And still from life some scattered comfort glean.

The dead, alas! I sorrowed for the dead,
Until well-nigh my madness had returned;
Till memory of them grew a thing of dread,
And therefore towards a living friend I yearned,
My brother! then my soul unto thee turned;
Then pined I for thy spirit's buoyant play,
Like the chained captive for the light of day!

The kindness of his youth came back to me;
I saw his form in visions of the night,

I seemed to hear his footsteps light and free
Upon my floors; the memoried delight
Of his rich voice came back with sweeter might!
Perchance 'twas madness—so I often thought
For with insatiate zeal in me it wrought.

"I will arise," I cried, "like him of yore,
The conscience-stricken prodigal, and lay
Myself, as in the dust, his face before,
And, 'I have sinned, my brother!' I will say—
'Forgive, forgive!' The clouds shall pass away,
And I will banquet on his love; and rest
My weary soul on his sustaining breast!"

I gathered up my strength; I asked of none
Council or aid: I crossed the desert sea;
The purpose of my soul, to all unknown,
Was yet supporting energy to me.
I was like one from cruel bonds set free,
Who walks exulting on, yet telleth not
The all-sufficing gladness of his lot.

Through the great cities of the East I passed
Into the kingdom where he reigned supreme;
I came unto a gorgeous palace, vast
As the creation of a poet's dream:—
My strength gave way, how little did I seem!
I felt like Joseph's brethren, mean and base,
I turned aside and dared not meet his face.

Hard by there was a grove of cypress trees;
A place, as if for mourning spirits made;
Thither I sped, my burdened heart to ease,
And weep unseen within the secret shade.—
A mighty woe that cypress grove displayed!
Oh let me weep! you will not say that tears
Wrung by that sorrow can be stanched by years!

There was a tomb;—a tomb as of a king;
A gorgeous palace of the unconscious dead.
My heart died in me, like the failing wing
Of the struck bird, as on that wall I read
My brother's name! Feeling and memory fled;
The flood-gates of my misery gave way,
And senseless on the marble floor I lay.

I lay for hours; and when my sense returned
The day was o'er; no moon was in the sky,
But the thick-strewn, eternal planets burned
In their celestial beauty stedfastly;—
It seemed each star was as a heavenly eye
Looking upon my sorrow;—thus I deemed,
And sate within the tomb ti'l morning beamed.

—For this I crossed the sea: in those far wilds,
Through perils numberless, for this I went!
What followed next I tell not: as a child's
Again my soul was feeble; too much spent
To suffer as of old, or to lament.
I came back to the scenes where life began,
By griefs, not years, a bowed and aged man.

I murmur not; but with submissive will
Resign to woe the evening of my day;
On the great morrow love will have its fill;
God will forgive our poor repentant clay,
Nor thrust us from his paradise away!
But brethren, be ye warned! Oh do not sever
Your kindred hearts, which should be linked
for ever!

THE OLD FRIEND AND THE NEW.

My old friend, he was a good old friend,
And I thought, like a fool, his face to mend;
I got another; but ah! to my cost
I found him unlike the one I had lost!
I and my friend, we were bred together:—
He had a smile like the summer weather;
A kind warm heart; and a hand as free:—
My friend, he was all the world to me!

I could sit with him and crack many a joke,
And talk of old times and the village folk;
He had been with us at the Christmas time;
He knew every tree we used to climb;
And where we played; and what befel,
My dear old friend remembered well.
It did me good but to see his face;
And I've put another friend in his place!
I wonder how such a thing could be,
For my old friend would not have slighted me!

Oh my fine new friend, he is smooth and bland,
With a jewelled ring or two on his hand;
He visits my lord and my lady fair;
He hums the last new opera air.
He takes not the children on his knee;
My faithful hound reproacheth me,
For he snarls when my new friend draweth near,
But my good old friend to the brute was dear!
I wonder how I such thing could do,
As change the old friend for the new!

My rare old friend, he read the plays,
That were written in Master Shakspeare's days;
He found in them wit and moral good:—
My new friend thinks them coarse and rude:—
And many a pleasant song he sung,
Because they were made when we were young;
He was not too grand, not he, to know
The merry old songs made long ago.
He writ his name on the window-pane;—
It was cracked by my new friend's riding-cane!

My good old friend, "he tirled at the pin,"
He opened the door and entered in;

We all were glad to see his face
As he took at the fire his 'customed place,
And the little children, loud in glee,
They welcomed him as they welcome me.
He knew our griefs, our joys he shared;
There cannot be friend with him compared;
We had tried him long, had found him true!
Why changed I the old friend for the new?

My new friend cometh in lordly state;
He peals a startling ring at the gate;
There's hurry and pomp, there's pride and din,
And my new friend bravely entereth in.
I bring out the noblest wines for cheer,
I make him a feast that costeth dear;
But he knows not what in my heart lies deep;—
He may laugh with me, but never shall weep,
For there is no bond between us twain;
And I sigh for my dear old friend again;
And thus, too late, I bitterly rue
That I changed the old friend for the new!

MABEL ON MIDSUMMER DAY.

A STORY OF THE OLDEN TIME.

Part First.

"Arise, my maiden, Mabel,"
The mother said, "arise,
For the golden sun of Midsummer
Is shining in the skies.

"Arise my little maiden,
For thou must speed away,
To wait upon thy grandmother
This livelong summer day.

"And thou must carry with thee
This wheaten cake so fine;
This new-made pat of butter;
This little flask of wine!

"And tell the dear old body,
This day I cannot come,
For the good man went out yester-morn,
And he is not come home.

"And more than this, poor Amy
Upon my knee doth lie;
I fear me, with this fever-pain
The little child will die!

"And thou can'st help thy grandmother;
The table thou can'st spread;
Can'st feed the little dog and bird,
And thou can'st make her bed.

"And thou can'st fetch the water,
From the lady-well hard by;
And thou can'st gather from the wood
The fagots brown and dry.

"Can'st go down to the lonesome glen,
To milk the mother-ewe;
This is the work, my Mabel,
That thou wilt have to do.

"But listen now, my Mabel,
This is Midsummer-day,
When all the fairy people
From elf-land come away.

"And when thou art in lonesome glen,
Keep by the running burn,
And do not pluck the strawberry flower,
Nor break the lady-fern.

"But think not of the fairy folk,
Lest mischief should befall;
Think only of poor Amy,
And how thou lov'st us all.

"Yet keep good heart, my Mabel,
If thou the fairies see,
And give them kindly answer
If they should speak to thee.

"And when into the fir-wood
Thou go'st for fagots brown,
Do not, like idle children,
Go wandering up and down.

"But, fill thy little apron,
My child, with earnest speed;
And that thou break no living bough
Within the wood, take heed.

"For they are spiteful brownies
Who in the wood abide,
So be thou careful of this thing,
Lest evil should betide.

"But think not, little Mabel,
Whilst thou art in the wood,
Of dwarfish, wilful brownies,
But of the Father good.

"And when thou goest to the spring,
To fetch the water thence,
Do not disturb the little stream,
Lest this should give offence.

"For the queen of all the fairies
She loves that water bright;
I've seen her drinking there myself
On many a summer night.

"But she's a gracious lady,
And her thou need'st not fear;
Only disturb thou not the stream,
Nor spill the water clear!"

"Now all this I will heed, mother,
Will no word disobey,
And wait upon the grandmother
This livelong summer day!"

Part Second.

Away tripped little Mabel,
With the wheaten cake so fine;
With the new-made pat of butter,
And the little flask of wine.

And long before the sun was hot,
And morning mists had cleared,
Beside the good old grandmother
The willing child appeared.

And all her mother's message
She told with right good-will,
How that the father was away,
And the little child was ill.

And then she swept the hearth up clean,
And then the table spread;
And next she fed the dog and bird;
And then she made the bed.

"And go now," said the grandmother,
"Ten paces down the dell,
And bring in water for the day;
Thou know'st the lady-well!"

The first time that good Mabel went,
Nothing at all saw she,
Except a bird—a sky-blue bird—
That sate upon a tree.

The next time that good Mabel went,
There sate a lady bright
Beside the well,—a lady small,
All clothed in green and white.

A curtsey low made Mabel,
And then she stooped to fill
Her pitcher at the sparkling spring,
But no drop did she spill.

"Thou art a handy maiden,"
The fairy lady said;
"Thou hast not spilled a drop, nor yet
The fair spring troubled!

"And for this thing which thou hast done,
Yet may'st not understand,
I give to thee a better gift
Than houses or than land.

"Thou shalt do well, whate'er thou dost,
As thou hast done this day;
Shalt have the will and power to please,
And shalt be loved alway!"

Thus having said, she passed from sight,
And nought could Mabel see,
But the little bird, the sky-blue bird,
Upon the leafy tree.

—"And now go," said the grandmother,
"And fetch in fagots dry;
All in the neighbouring fir-wood,
Beneath the trees they lie."

Away went kind, good Mabel,
Into the fir-wood near,
Where all the ground was dry and brown,
And the grass grew thin and sere.

She did not wander up and down,
Nor yet a live branch pull,
But steadily, of the fallen boughs
She picked her apron full.

And when the wild-wood brownies
Came sliding to her mind,
She drove them thence, as she was told,
With home-thoughts sweet and kind.

But all that while the brownies
Within the fir-wood still,
They watched her how she picked the wood,
And strove to do no ill.

"And oh, but she is small and neat,"
Said one, "'twere shame to spite
A creature so demure and meek,
A creature harmless quite!"

"Look only," said another,
"At her little gown of blue;
At the kerchief pinned about her head,
And at her little shoe!"

"Oh, but she is a comely child,"
Said a third, "and we will lay
A good-luck-penny in her path,
A boon for her this day,—

Seeing she broke no living wood;
No live thing did affray."

With that the smallest penny,
Of the finest silver ore,
Upon the dry and slippery path,
Lay Mabel's feet before.

With joy she picked the penny up,
The fairy penny good;
And with her fagots dry and brown
Went wondering from the wood.

"Now she has that," said the brownies,
"Let flax be ever so dear,
Will buy her clothes of the very best,
For many and many a year!"

—"And go, now," said the grandmother,
"Since falling is the dew,
Go down unto the lonesome glen,
And milk the mother-ewe!"

All down into the lonesome glen,
  Through copses thick and wild;
Through moist, rank grass, by trickling streams
  Went on the willing child.

And when she came to lonesome glen,
  She kept beside the burn,
And neither plucked the strawberry-flower,
  Nor broke the lady-fern.

And while she milked the mother-ewe
  Within the lonesome glen,
She wished that little Amy
  Were strong and well again.

And soon as she had thought this thought,
  She heard a coming sound,
As if a thousand fairy-folk
  Were gathering all around.

And then she heard a little voice,
  Shrill as the midge's wing,
That spake aloud, "a human child
  Is here—yet mark this thing!

"The lady-fern is all unbroke,
The strawberry-flower unta'en!
What shall be done for her, who still
From mischief can refrain?"

"Give her a fairy-cake!" said one,
"Grant her a wish!" said three;
"The latest wish that she hath wished,"
Said all, "whate'er it be!"

—Kind Mabel heard the words they spake,
And from the lonesome glen,
Unto the good old grandmother
Went gladly back again.

Thus happened it to Mabel
On that Midsummer-day,
And these three fairy-blessings
She took with her away.

—'Tis good to make all duty sweet,
To be alert and kind;
'Tis good, like little Mabel,
To have a willing mind!

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

AWAKE, arise, good Christians,
Let nothing you dismay;
Remember Christ our Saviour
Was born upon this day!

The self-same moon was shining
That now is in the sky,
When a holy band of angels
Came down from God on high.

Came down on clouds of glory,
Arrayed in shining light,
Unto the shepherd-people
Who watched their flocks by night.

And through the midnight silence
The heavenly host began,
"Glory to God the highest;
On earth good-will to man!

"Fear not, we bring good tidings,
For, on this happy morn,
The promised one, the Saviour,
In Bethlehem town is born!"

Up rose the joyful shepherds
From the ground whereon they lay,
As ye should rise good Christians,
To hail this blessed day!

Up rose the simple shepherds,
All with a joyful mind;
"And let us go, with speed," said they,
"This holy child to find!"

Not in a kingly palace
The son of God they found,
But in a lowly manger
Where oxen fed around.

The glorious king of heaven;
The Lord of all the earth,
In mercy condescended
To be of humble birth.

There worshipped him the wise men,
As prophets had foretold;
And laid their gifts before him,
Frankincense, myrrh, and gold.

Long looked the simple shepherds,
With holy wonder stirred,
Then praised God for all the things
Which they had seen and heard.

And homeward went rejoicing
Upon that Christmas morn,
Declaring unto every one,
That Jesus Christ was born.

That he was born,—the Saviour,
The promised one of old;
That they had seen the Son of God
To every one they told.

And, like unto the shepherds,
We wander far and near,
And bid ye wake, good Christians,
The joyful news to hear.

Awake, arise, good Christians,
Let nothing you dismay,
Remember Christ the Saviour
Was born upon this day!

LITTLE CHILDREN.

Sporting through the forest wide;
Playing by the water-side;
Wandering o'er the heathy fells;
Down within the woodland dells;
All among the mountains wild,
Dwelleth many a little child!
In the baron's hall of pride;
By the poor man's dull fireside:
'Mid the mighty, 'mid the mean,
Little children may be seen,
Like the flowers that spring up fair,
Bright and countless, everywhere!

In the far isles of the main;
In the desert's lone domain;

In the savage mountain-glen,
'Mong the tribes of swarthy men;
Wheresoe'er a foot hath gone:
Wheresoe'er the sun hath shone
On a league of peopled ground,
Little children may be found!

Blessings on them! they in me
Move a kindly sympathy,
With their wishes, hopes, and fears;
With their laughter and their tears;
With their wonder so intense,
And their small experience!

Little children, not alone
On the wide earth are ye known,
'Mid its labours and its cares,
'Mid its sufferings and its snares.
Free from sorrow, free from strife,
In the world of love and life,
Where no sinful thing hath trod;
In the presence of your God,
Spotless, blameless, glorified,
Little children, ye abide!

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